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ABSTRACT

The task of addressing the complex and deeply rooted problems faced by the nation's at-risk youth is one that largely falls outside the scope of traditional institutions. Investment in the development and operation of "second-chance" education and employment programs has historically been inadequate, haphazard, and uncertain. The gains in the area of providing second chances for employment and training to at-risk individuals that were made in the 1970s were largely negated by the mid-1980s, by which time financial support for second-chance programming had been relegated to the back burner. The research that has been conducted on second-chance programs indicates that no single program approach solves all youth unemployment problems. Longer-duration programs with several service elements are more likely to produce positive outcomes and have longer-lasting effects. Targeting program efforts on the neediest groups has strong and clear payoffs and is an essential element of a youth employment strategy. Dropout prevention should be a pivotal aim of youth programming. Four promising new directions that have begun in the 1980s are the education reform movement, state-level initiatives, teen parenting prevention programs, and dropout and pregnancy prevention efforts at the middle school level. New human service and dropout prevention approaches should be explored as America enters the next decade. Efforts should also be made to increase interventions at the middle school level and direct resources more effectively. (Appendixes include descriptions of illustrative programs and four commentaries on this paper, written by Gary Burtless, Jacqueline P. Danzberger, Morton H. Sklar, and Richard F. Elmore.) (MN)

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Youth and the Workplace: Second-Chance Programs and the Hard-To-Serve

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Youth and America's Future:
The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship

YOUTH AND AMERICA'S FUTURE:
THE WILLIAM T. GRANT FOUNDATION COMMISSION ON WORK, FAMILY AND CITIZENSHIP

When William Thomas Grant established the Grant Foundation in 1936, he sought a better understanding of the ways in which individuals adapt to the vicissitudes of life. Touched in his professional life by the importance of good human relationships, Mr. Grant wished to "help children develop what is in them" so they would better "enjoy all the good things the world has to offer them."

Fifty years later, recognizing the special needs of older adolescents in our changing society, the Foundation's Trustees established **Youth and America's Future** with much the same purpose; its charge is to evaluate current knowledge, stimulate new ideas, increase communication among researchers, practitioners and policymakers, and, thus, to help our nation chart a better future for youth.

The Foundation's President, Robert J. Haggerty, M.D., has described the Commission's unique perspective:

> *"Against a rising chorus of legitimate concern about the many problems facing today's youth, the Foundation has initiated this Commission on Youth and America's Future to speak in a different voice. It will explore the strengths of America's young men and women, their families and the programs and community institutions that serve them. We adopt this approach not to diminish the importance of the problems that exist, but to learn the lessons of success. The Foundation is confident that this effort to look with renewed respect at youth, where it strides as well as where it stumbles, will help forge the links of understanding and mutual responsibility that make our democracy strong."*

The publications in this series have been prepared to inform the Commission and to stimulate its thinking. While the Commission does not necessarily endorse the various findings presented, it does encourage their thoughtful consideration in the interests of American youth.

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FOREWORD

The field of youth employment is a comparatively young one -- a little less than 20 years old. Its history has been characterized by transition and uncertainty, as new legislative and programmatic initiatives were tried, modified, strengthened or discarded. Throughout it all, the practitioner's understanding of how best to serve at-risk youngsters has slowly grown, aided by both research and experience in the field.

P/PV's own work in the design, management and evaluation of "second-chance" youth programs over the past nine years has convinced us of the immense potential such programs hold. It also has left us, at times, disheartened by the limitations of our knowledge and our capacity to do more.

In submitting this paper to the W. T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, our aim is to present a perspective that depicts the current strengths and limitations of second-chance efforts, makes clear their crucial place among strategies for serving the nation's youth, and suggests worthwhile ways in which they might be enhanced in the future.

I'd like to thank the authors, whose task was not just to synthesize a great deal of research and field knowledge, but also to craft a presentation that reflects P/PV's own perspective. In both I feel they have succeeded.

On behalf of Public/Private Ventures, I would also like to thank the Commission for inviting us to prepare a paper for its use. We trust that its work will do much to improve prospects for America's youth, both now and in the future.

Michael A. Bailin
President

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I. SOME BACKGROUND ISSUES

In this paper, we review the current state of "second-chance" programming for youth who are at risk in the labor market, including the recent history of such efforts and the state of knowledge and practice. In addition, we present some broad recommendations regarding directions and emphases for such programming in the next decade.

A relatively brief paper like this one, of course, cannot capture everything. Each topic that is discussed here could unfold into a study of some length and complexity. Nor, for that matter, will one find unanimous agreement among experts on the opinions and judgments advanced here. Instead, we offer a general map of the terrain, drawing from the research, writing and program experience that has evolved particularly in the past decade.

To begin, we review some broad trends affecting the youth population in general. These suggest that the general population is changing in size and composition as we move into the next century, particularly as regards the youth cohort. At the same time, changes in the economy and advances in technology are altering the nature of work in America. How these changes will affect youth employment may be hard to predict, but one cannot assess the state of youth employment programming without taking them into account.

In this section, we will highlight these pivotal trends and their potential effects on youth in the workplace, chart recent youth unemployment statistics, and then focus on the segment of the youth population most at risk of being affected by these problems and thus of failing to achieve productive careers and lives.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The Shrinking Youth Cohort. Changes are taking place in the numbers and composition of the birth cohorts and immigrant groups --changes that will alter the nature of the youth cohort in the next decade. In the sixties and seventies, the education system and labor market had to adjust to an influx of youth from the postwar baby boom generation. Between 1960 and 1980, the population of 16- to 24-year-olds nearly doubled (Current Population Survey). However, the size of the youth cohort as a percentage of the total population is now diminishing, and institutions must again readjust. Between 1984 and 1990, the number of youth aged 16-24 will decrease 12.5 percent (at an average rate of 2.2 percent a year), as contrasted with increases projected for every other age group (Fullerton, 1985). (See Table I.1).

Table I.1

Civilian Noninstitutional Population by Sex and Age
Actual 1975-84 and Projected to 1995

	Average annual rate of change			
	1975-80	1980-84	1984-90	1990-95
Total. 16 years & over	1.8	1.3	0.9	0.8
Men	1.9	1.3	1.3	0.8
16 to 24	1.4	-1.1	-2.4	-1.2
25 to 54	2.1	2.3	2.2	1.4
55 and over	2.0	1.3	0.7	0.7
Women	1.8	1.2	1.0	0.7
16 to 24	1.1	-1.3	-2.2	-1.2
25 to 54	1.9	2.1	2.0	1.3
55 and over	2.2	1.5	0.9	0.8

SOURCE: Data are based on Census Bureau "middle" projections of the population, in Fullerton, 1985.

The effect that the diminishing supply of youth will have on the labor market is unclear. One deceptively simple conclusion is that a smaller supply of youth coupled with the present labor demand will act to lower high youth unemployment rates. In fact, among youth, the relationship between labor force supply and labor market demand may not be that direct. For instance, when the baby boom generation began to enter the labor market, policy-makers feared that youth unemployment would double as the entry-level job market was saturated. In fact, the unemployment rate rose less than had been expected because the labor market expanded to provide almost twice as many jobs at lower average wages (Hahn and Lerman, 1985; Saks, 1983). Thus, given the range of factors that influence the nature of youth employment (and unemployment), a shrinking youth labor pool will not decisively lower high youth unemployment rates.

Growing Minority Population. At the same time as the youth cohort is declining relative to the total population, its composition is changing: among youth aged 16-24, a higher proportion will be from the minority population. This increase is due not only to higher minority fertility rates, but also to high net immigration rates.

In the 1980 Census, the average white citizen was 31, the average black was 25, and the average Hispanic was only 22. The increase in minority populations and the concomitant aging of the white population is a trend that is predicted to continue well into the future. Fertility rates for white women have fallen (1.7 children per female) and are now lower than the rate needed just for a population to replace itself. Fertility rates for minority women remain relatively high: blacks (2.4) and Mexican-Americans (2.9) (Hodgkinson, 1985:3). Thus, augmented by high immigration rates, the minority percentage of the population is projected to increase dramatically. By the year 2000, the proportion of 15- to 24-year-olds who are ethnic or racial minorities is expected to increase from one in six to almost one in three (Spencer, 1984).

More Non-English Dominant Youth. The continued high immigration rates projected by the Current Population Survey will raise the number of language minorities in this country. Whereas in 1970 blacks constituted almost 90 percent of the minority population, by 2030 that proportion will be down to 75.4 percent, in large part due to the high net immigration of races other than white or black. Hispanic and Asian immigrants will make up the bulk of the remaining 24.6 percent. The Census Bureau projects that net immigration will account for 25 percent of the addition to the total population, compared with about 20 percent during the 1970s and 13 percent during the 1960s (Fullerton, 1985:20). The need for improved English as a Second Language and remedial training will be a growing concern as educators and employers confront the special needs of language minorities.

CHANGES IN THE NATURE OF WORK

As the size and composition of the future labor force changes, the labor market, too, is being transformed by advances in technology and shifts in industry. Technological innovations that are increasing automation and the shift from manufacturing to service sector growth may transform the nature of work for the coming generation.

Growth of the Service Sector. The American economy has experienced a shift from the manufacturing to the service sector. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, manufacturing jobs, which represented 25.1 percent of all jobs in 1959, are projected to decline to only 17.2 percent by 1995 (Personick, 1985:27,34). New labor-saving technology, stable prices and a more experienced labor force have allowed the manufacturing industry to increase productivity without a corresponding growth in employment. In contrast, the service sector (including communications, trade, public utilities, real estate, finance, transportation, insurance, government and miscellaneous services) will provide nine out of 10 of the 16 million new jobs projected by 1990 (Personick, 1985:26).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the fastest declining occupations in the U.S. are low-skilled and unskilled industrial jobs, such as garment and shoe-sewing machine tenders. (See Table I.2). The fastest growing occupations are technology-based occupations, such as computer programmers, computer systems analysts, and electrical and electronics engineers. (See Table I.3). But although many of these technologically oriented occupations are increasing rapidly from relatively low employment levels, collectively they do not account for a large portion of the new jobs that will be added by 1995. A high proportion of the jobs in the expanding service sector are low-skill occupations, such as waiters and janitors. In fact, seven of the 10 occupations expected to add the most jobs by 1995 require only a high school diploma or less. (See Table I.4).

"High-Tech" Jobs. Although electronics and computer-related jobs are indeed among the fastest growing occupations, it is not clear that the economy is undergoing a wholesale transformation to a high-technology society. Some analysts argue that advances in technology will require a more highly skilled work force. Others disagree, contending that many of the jobs generated around the new technologies will continue to be low-skill jobs, such as data entry positions.

A number of recent school reform reports have made recommendations based on the assumption that youth will need higher skills in order to master rapid changes in technology. But, as education experts Stedman and Smith remind us, "[We] are as uncertain about future occupational demands as we have always been. This

Table I.2

Fastest Declining Occupations, 1984-95
(numbers in thousands)

Occupation	Employment		Percent declines in employment
	1984	1995	
Stenographers	239	143	-40.3
Shoe-sewing machine operators and tenders	33	22	-31.5
Railroad brake, signal, and switch operators	48	35	-26.4
Rail car repairers	27	21	-22.3
Furnace, kiln, or kettle operators and tenders	63	50	-20.9
Shoe and leather workers and repairers, precision	43	35	-18.6
Private household workers	993	811	-18.3
Station installers and repairers, telephone	111	92	-17.4
Sewing machine operators, garment	676	563	-16.7
Textile machine operators, tenders, setters, and set-up operators, winding	279	235	-15.7

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics Data from Personick, 1985

Table I.3

Fastest Growing Occupations, 1984-95
(numbers in thousands)

Occupation	Employment		Change in employment 1984-95	Percent of total job growth 1984-95
	1984	1995	Percent	
Paralegal personnel	53	104	97.5	.3
Computer programmers	341	586	71.7	1.5
Computer systems analysts, electronic data processing (EDP)	308	520	68.7	1.3
Medical assistants	128	207	62.0	.5
Data processing equipment repairers	50	78	56.2	.2
Electrical and electronics engineers	390	597	52.8	1.3
Electrical and electronics technicians and technologists	404	607	50.7	1.3
Computer operators, except personnel equipment	241	353	46.1	.7
Peripheral EDP equipment operators	70	102	45.0	.2
Travel agents	72	103	43.9	.2

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics Data from Personick, 1985.

Table I.4

Occupations with the Largest Job Growth, 1984-95
(numbers in thousands)

Occupation	Change in employment 1984-95		Percent of total job growth 1984-95
	Number	Percent	
Cashiers	556	29.8	3.6
Registered nurses	452	32.8	2.8
Janitors & cleaners including maids & housekeeping cleaners	443	15.1	2.8
Truck drivers	428	17.2	2.7
Waiters & waitresses	424	26.1	2.7
Wholesale trade salesworkers	369	29.6	2.3
Nursing aides, orderlies & attendants	348	26.9	2.2
Salespersons, retail	343	12.6	2.2
Accountants & auditors	307	34.8	1.9
Teachers, kindergarten & elementary	281	20.3	1.9

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics Data from Personick, 1985.

is a good reason for training people to think and to be adaptable. But it does not necessarily justify increased training in math and science" (1983:94).

Still, the summary finding of the National Assessment of Educational Progress of the literacy study suggests there may be a problem:

> While the overwhelming majority of young adults adequately perform tasks at the lower levels on each of the three [NAEP literacy measurement] scales, sizeable numbers appear unable to do well on tasks of moderate complexity. Only a relatively small percentage of this group is estimated to perform at levels typified by the more complex and challenging tasks (NAEP, 1986:4).

Hence, as regards skill requirements and the general competency of the nation's youth, we may be headed toward something of a mismatch between skills and requirements.

Increasing Job Stratification. How will the labor market changes outlined above affect the job prospects of teenagers during the next 10 years? One line of thought is that a large percentage of the new jobs being created in the service sector are low-paying, with little chance of promotion. Although there is ample evidence to support the claim that service sector jobs are lower-paying on average, the evidence that many of them are "dead-end" jobs is harder to procure.

A study by Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison for the Joint Economic Committee (1987) finds that the growth of the service sector is associated with an increasing number of low-wage jobs. Between 1979 and 1985, 44 percent of the net new jobs created paid poverty-level wages. And evidence from economist Lynn E. Brown suggests that "the income distribution of workers in the service sector also differs from that in manufacturing. There are a lot of people flipping hamburgers at the bottom of the service income scale, and there is a healthy group of lawyers and doctors at the top--but the middle sags a little." (American Demographics, 1986:18).

Yet, the forecasted growth in low-wage jobs is no clear indication that the number of jobs with limited opportunities for advancement is increasing. While some low-wage jobs, like a bank teller's, have some career potential, others, like a fast-food restaurant cashier's, present few opportunities for promotion.

Job Satisfaction. Furthermore, it is unclear whether and how a teenager's perception of job growth potential may influence his or her employment decisions. Some researchers speculate that "high turnover rates and voluntary unemployment are [in part] a response to the unsatisfactory type of job that is available to

many young workers. These are often dead-end jobs with neither opportunity for advancement within the firm nor training and experience that would be useful elsewhere." (Feldstein, 1973:14). This argument presumes that some youth are unemployed not because they cannot find any jobs, but because the available jobs are unsatisfactory. A recent study of 16- to 24-year-old, inner-city blacks supports this theory, finding that 68 percent of the youth who were not employed and not in school thought they could obtain a minimum-wage job relatively easily (Freeman and Holzer, 1986:16).

Among the employed inner-city youth from the same survey, "[Few] worked in jobs that required considerable education or on-the-job training. As a result, few regarded their current jobs as having long-term growth possibilities and few intended to stay for an extended period." (Ballen and Freeman, 1986:95). This may explain why businesses like fast-food restaurants, which offer jobs with limited growth potential, have a hard time filling positions even when they raise their wages above the minimum rate.

On the other hand, many youth, especially those who are enrolled in school, may choose to work in a "dead-end" job just to earn spending money with no intention of making this job a career. In that case, high turnover rates don't necessarily signal a youth employment problem.

More Part-time and Temporary Jobs. Another predicted effect of occupational changes and expansion of the service sector is an increase in part-time and temporary jobs. According to the AFL-CIO, part-time jobs have grown at a rate nearly twice that of full-time jobs in recent years. This is attributed primarily to the growth in service sector jobs. The sales and service industries contribute about 80 percent of all part-time work (1986:19). And, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the work week averages 32.8 hours in retail stores and only 27.1 hours in eating and drinking establishments, compared to an average of more than 40 hours in manufacturing (Personick, 1985:31).

Moreover, an increasing percentage of part-time jobs may be taken by those who prefer to work full-time. Though the majority of people working in part-time jobs do so by choice, there is a growing number of people taking part-time jobs who want full-time work. In the last six years "the growth of voluntary part-time work was only 6.5 percent, while part-time involuntary jobs grew by leaps and bounds--63 percent. In fact nearly three out of every four part-time jobs created between 1979 and 1985 were filled by people wanting full-time work." (AFL-CIO, 1986:19).

Part-time Work and Teenagers. Very little research has been done to estimate how many part-time jobs are held by youth and whether

that number is increasing. The majority of youth who work while they are enrolled in high school, however, hold part-time jobs.

The positive effects of education on eventual labor force experience are well documented: more years of schooling are associated with higher wages and lower unemployment, with high school completion an important demarcation point (Meyer and Wise, 1980). The effects of work experience during schooling, however, are less clear.

Meyer and Wise argue that work experience during high school is associated with higher rates of employment, earnings and wages after high school. Persons who worked 16 to 20 hours per week in high school are estimated to earn annually about 12 percent more than those who didn't work at all in high school (1980:480). However, part-time work seems beneficial only up to a point. Too many work hours outside of school increase the likelihood of a student dropping out. Meyer and Wise estimate that students who work more than about 20 hours per week in high school are considerably less likely to remain in school than those who work fewer hours (1980:514).

In all, the predicted growth of part-time jobs in the future may provide more youth with the opportunity to obtain useful early labor force experience while in school. On the other hand, to the extent that students' work time rises above a certain threshold, dropout rates could increase.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The implications of technological advances, an expanding service sector and increasing numbers of part-time jobs will not be the same for all youth entering the job market. For many youth, the transition into the labor force will be a difficult one. A significant number will not succeed. This section briefly outlines youth unemployment trends and discusses the high incidence of labor market problems among the "at-risk" youth segment.

Over the last 30 years, the gap between youth and adult unemployment rates has steadily widened. In the 1940s, the gap was a little over four points. By the spring of 1985, with a youth unemployment rate of 19 percent, the difference had grown to more than 13 points (NGA, 1985).

Yet unemployment is not a serious problem for most youth. A large part of youth unemployment can be explained by the volatility of the youth labor force. Many youth experience unemployment for short periods as they enter the labor market for the first time and experiment with careers and higher education before finally "settling in" to permanent careers and employment.

For a significant fraction of youth, though, unemployment is a serious and chronic problem. These youngsters enter the labor force, but fail to make a solid attachment to jobs, typically encounter long spells of joblessness, find jobs with increasing difficulty and finally, in high proportions, join the pool of "discouraged workers"--unemployed but not actively seeking work. According to Hahn and Lerman, in 1979 only 9 percent of the nation's youth accounted for more than three-fifths of all weeks of unemployment among youth (1985:7). Minority and low-income youth are disproportionately represented in this group.

Black youth fare much worse in the labor market than their white peers, and the discrepancy between their rates of participation in the labor force has grown more pronounced in recent years. While unemployment rates for white youth have risen gradually, rates for black youth have soared. In 1954, 14.7 percent of 18- to 19-year-old black youth were unemployed. In 1985, 35 percent, or one in three black 18- to 19-year-olds, was jobless (U.S. Department of Labor).

However, the unemployment rate understates the seriousness of the employment problem for black youth. Unemployment rates only measure the number of youth actively seeking work, and many youth who have become discouraged with the job search are not represented in the figures at all.

The Inactivity Rate. In response to this problem, some researchers prefer a more sensitive measure of the number of youth who are "inactive": neither employed, enrolled in school nor in the military. Table I.5 shows that although the inactivity rate of non-white 16- to 17-year-olds has declined as a result of higher levels of school enrollment, it has increased dramatically for non-white 18- to 24-year-olds. The inactivity rate of non-white 20- to 24-year-old males has almost tripled since 1964 (from 10.5 to 27.0), and that of their female counterparts has remained devastatingly high (45.6). The inactivity rate of young white males has also risen, but it remains considerably lower than the alarming rates reported for non-whites (NRC 1985:47). These young people who are neither working nor studying are in danger of becoming disengaged from society. Many of the females may be teenage mothers who are unable to find a job or childcare, and are dependent on AFDC for income. Some of these youth may have serious drinking and drug problems, or be deeply involved in crime. Clearly their youth is being wasted and their chances of obtaining a well-paying job as adults are diminishing.

The Effects of Early Unemployment. Researchers disagree about the long-term effects of early unemployment on later labor force experience. Some argue that it significantly increases the probability of long-term unemployment. For example, Lerman finds that teenagers who were unemployed 15 or more weeks in one year were four times as likely to be unemployed in March the next year

Table I.5

Inactivity Rates for Youth by Race and Sex

Group	Year 1964	1978	1983[a]	
White males				
16-17 years old	3.3	3.6	4.5	
18-19 years old	8.0	4.7	13.1	
20-24 years old	6.1	5.9	11.6	
Nonwhite males				
16-17 years old	8.4	3.7	4.7	
18-19 years old	14.6	13.2	29.3	
20-24 years old	10.5	15.9	27.0	
White females				
16-17 years old	9.6	4.6	5.7	(5.7)
18-19 years old	31.9	13.2	18.5	(18.6)
20-24 years old	46.8	24.1	25.1	(25.3)
Nonwhite females				
16-17 years old	11.5	6.4	5.8	(5.9)
18-19 years old	36.2	28.0	42.2	(42.5)
20-24 years old	45.7	33.5	45.6	(45.6)

[a] For 1983, figures in parentheses are female inactivity rates calculated to take account of military service by females.

NOTE: Inactivity rates are the percentage of the population that is neither employed, serving in the military, nor enrolled in school. The years 1964 and 1978 were selected because the unemployment rate for white males aged 35-44 was an identical 2.5 percent and the business cycle was about at its peak. October 1983 is the most recent date for which comparable rates can be computed. In October 1983 the rate of unemployment among white males aged 35-44 was 5.2 percent (not seasonally adjusted).

SOURCES: Bureau of Labor Statistics and Congressional Budget Office Data in National Research Council, 1985

(as cited in Saks, 1983:25). Others argue that once individual characteristics have been controlled for, early unemployment experience does not increase a youth's chances of unemployment four to five years later (NRC, 1985:64). Researchers agree, however, that early unemployment experience seems to negatively affect wage levels in the long term, and that this effect appears to be stronger and more substantial for youth with lower levels of education (NRC, 1985:64, Ballen and Freeman, 1986).

AT-RISK YOUTH

Youth who are at high risk of failing in the labor market can be identified by a cluster of characteristics, each of which raises the probability that they will experience chronic unemployment or underemployment. These young people may lack the knowledge to find a job, the contacts to help them into the working world, basic reading and writing skills, or even an understanding of the behavior that most employers require. The proportion of youth for whom this is true is especially high in urban communities with high concentrations of low-income or minority youth. Those youth who are most at risk are also likely to be among the following:

High School Dropouts. Most high school dropouts lack the basic skills and credentials to make them attractive job candidates. For this reason, dropouts are more likely to be unemployed than high school graduates. Furthermore, dropouts can expect lifetime earnings equal to only two-thirds that of high school graduates (Levin, 1985:12). The gaps in earnings and employment between high school graduates and dropouts are not only substantial but growing. A report issued by the General Accounting Office shows that the wage gap between 20- to 22-year-old male dropouts and high school graduates increased 12 percent between 1966 and 1978 (from a 12 to 24 percent gap) (1986:29).

Teenage Parenthood. The devastating social and economic consequences associated with teenage parenthood show up clearly in the statistics. Only 38 percent of 17-year-old mothers received their high school diplomas in 1983 as compared to 86 percent of mothers who were at least 20 when they had their first child (Mott & Marsiglio, 1985:236). Research suggests that teen fathers are also more likely to drop out of high school before graduation than males who do not father a child (NRC, 1987). The consequences are most severe for unmarried teenage mothers: three out of four single mothers under age 25 live below the poverty line (Children's Defense Fund, 1985). Perhaps the most disheartening aspect of teenage parenthood is that it diminishes the life opportunities not only for the young mother but also for her children, who are likely to grow up in poverty.

Children From Low-Income and Welfare Families. Youth from low-income or poverty backgrounds face considerably higher risks of being unemployed. Studies have found that, even when controlling for income, youth from families on welfare fare much worse in the job market than youth from families in which a parent works (regardless of whether that parent is a male or female). A number of factors may explain this phenomenon. Youth from welfare families may have less knowledge of appropriate work attitudes and behavior and may lack information and "connections" to obtain jobs (Freeman and Holzer, 1986).

The number of youth disadvantaged by a low-income background is growing. The percentage of 16- to 19-year-olds living in poor families increased from 14.9 percent in 1981 to 19.3 percent in 1985. By March 1985, approximately one out of every five teenagers was living in an impoverished family, and nearly 29 percent were living in poor or near-poor families (Sum, Harrington, & Goedicke, 1986:22).

SERVING AT-RISK YOUTH: SECOND-CHANCE EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Addressing the complex and deeply rooted problems faced by the nation's at-risk youngsters is a task that largely falls outside the scope of traditional institutions. It instead has fallen to so-called second-chance efforts--employment and training programs, alternative schooling, etc., whose major focus has been preparing high-risk youth for the workplace.

Investment in the development and operation of these programs has historically been inadequate, haphazard and uncertain. Many view serious youth employment problems as all but insurmountable. Others see the problem as small--a residuum of other phenomena such as poor schools or weak labor market demand. As these problems are solved, they argue--and as the youth cohort ages--youth joblessness will cease to be a serious issue.

These contradictory views notwithstanding, it is a fact that a significant fraction of youth remains at risk of long-term joblessness, and that the situation is unlikely to change without intervention. To do nothing is to shoulder the costs of higher joblessness, higher public welfare, more crime and less productive capacity. The severity of risk for these youth and the costs to society of failing to respond to this issue are sufficient justification in themselves for action.

Any strategies to improve the employment chances of all youth will be incomplete if they ignore the special needs of the nation's high-risk youth. This group represents a disproportionate amount of the joblessness and underemployment youth experience. In the aggregate, then, youth will do better as

productive workers if prospects for the worst-off among them are improved. This strategy, too, argues for increased emphasis and attention to their needs.

Finally, strategies that help these youth may be strategies that help all youth. Programs that improve the performance of schools for those who are most at risk will frequently enhance the performance of schools for all students. Better knowledge of ways to prepare these youth for employment may lead to strategies that ease the transition into work for all youth.

The history of second-chance programs has been characterized by uneven funding and interest in these efforts, even as a useful body of knowledge about what works in the field has slowly evolved. The remainder of this paper makes clear, we believe, that we know enough of what works to proceed energetically with expanded, better focused efforts to serve at-risk youth effectively; and enough even to sketch out some useful directions for future initiatives and experiments.

II. POLICY AND PROGRAMMING: THE LAST DECADE

The last ten years have witnessed a fundamental shift in the emphasis on second-chance youth programming in the employment and training field. The 1970s ended with great hope--and ample funding--for what could be achieved by second-chance programming. But by the mid-1980s, the issue had been relegated to the back-burner, both in programmatic emphasis and financial support.

We may now be at the start of yet another shift, which will refocus resources on at-risk youth. It is not clear what shape this refocusing might take, in terms of either policies, programs, expectations or support. For now, the refocusing is primarily one of rhetoric, born of the logic and data presented in Chapter I. Understanding what happened over the last decade may be useful in formulating and implementing any new efforts and in molding our expectations about them.

Second-chance programming and concern for at-risk youth are, of course, not solely the province of the employment and training world. The vocational education system, alternative schools, the juvenile justice and family court systems, churches, drug treatment facilities, community-based organizations--an imposing number and variety of institutions and systems--also have an interest in and provide services to these youth. Nonetheless, the employment and training sector has for some time constituted what can be termed the "centerpiece" of most second-chance efforts.

The reason for this is simple: most second-chance efforts since the early 1970s, whatever their institutional aegis, have concentrated on preparing youth for, and securing, employment. This focus came about naturally for two reasons. First, since most at-risk youth were either not doing well in school or had dropped out, employment was left as the major alternative activity. Second, because counseling, drug treatment and other social service programs that had sprung up in the late 1960s did not provide jobs or the skills to get and hold jobs, youth often reverted to the same behavior that had caused them to enter a social program in the first place. Thus, pre-employment training, skills training, work experience and job development became integral components of most second-chance youth programs in the early 1970s. The financial support for these components came primarily from the federally-funded employment and training system: first the Manpower Development Training Act (MDTA), which began in the late 1960s to focus its resources on at-risk populations; and then, beginning in 1973, its successor, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA).

Expectations in the mid-1970s were reasonably high that workable solutions to the problems of high-risk youth could be found through second-chance employment and training programming. The

CETA legislation and appropriations contained substantial provision for work experience and support services for this group. And in 1975, the Departments of Labor, Justice, Commerce and Health, Education and Welfare embarked on a major national demonstration (Supported Work) to test the proposition that carefully structured work experience alone, without counseling, support services or remedial education, would be sufficient to assist dropout youth with criminal justice records to enter mainstream economic activity and lead self-sufficient, law-abiding lives.

In 1977, Congress passed the Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA). YEDPA aimed to establish a variety of programmatic interventions for youth who were both in and out of school, and at varying levels of risk, and to impose on those interventions a research framework that would produce reliable evidence and findings about what worked, for which youth, and at what cost. Though the YEDPA interventions varied--from trade skills training programs like the Ventures in Community Improvement (VICI) demonstration, to residential work experience programs like the Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC), to return-to-school initiatives such as the Youth Incentive Entitlement demonstration--they had in common a fundamental concept: that work, or training for work, would be the central feature of any successful second-chance effort.

The YEDPA initiative was a five-year, two-billion-dollar effort. It represented the apex of national support for the proposition that a massive infusion of resources, centered on employment and training interventions and structured to provide reliable data, would produce, if not answers, at least strong directions on how to deal effectively with youth in need of a "second chance."

By 1985, the employment and training world--now represented by CETA's successor, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)--had apparently abandoned its hope for and commitment to second-chance youth programming. In 1985, local jurisdictions were spending less than 70 percent of the $720 million per year allocated under JTPA nationally for youth programming. And of those youth JTPA did serve, the vast majority were in school or had high school diplomas; less than 30 percent were high school dropouts. The average youth program was 12 weeks long, and consisted of job search classes or direct placement, with no or minimal support services, no work experience and no skills training. Less than 10 percent of local JTPA officials interviewed in a national study said that JTPA was having any impact on critical local social problems like those of at-risk youth. An equally small proportion of officials either had used, or were interested in using, JTPA for second-chance youth programming.

What happened? What caused the apparently sudden and dramatic shift away from using employment and training interventions for second-chance youth programming?

Certainly the problem of at-risk youth had not lessened from 1975 to 1985. In fact, as the first chapter indicates, school dropout, youth unemployment and teenage pregnancy rates, as well as demographic trends, all warranted increasing concern--and thus increasing interventions--for at-risk youth. This concern simply was not reflected in public policy. Both employment and training and educational policies were, in fact, shifting efforts towards improving the performance of less needy, less at-risk youth.

Part of the shift can be explained by declining federal resources. As Table II.1 shows, federal funds for employment and training under JTPA had fallen by 1985 to 38 percent of their 1979 level. Such a large reduction would of necessity bring about a reduced emphasis on any particular group, such as at-risk youth--especially since total JTPA resources were sufficient to offer services to less than 5 percent of the total (both youth and adult) eligible population.

TABLE II.1

CETA/JTPA Allocations, 1979-1984
(in billions)

Year	Total
1979	$9.44
1980	7.54
1981	6.30
1982	4.09
1983	3.39
1984	3.60
1985	3.60

SOURCE: An Independent Sector Assessment of the Job Training Partnership Act, Grinker/Walker Associates, 1986.

However, funding reductions explain only a small part of the reduced emphasis on second-chance youth programming. The JTPA legislation did allocate 40 percent of its funds for youth (though the allocation was substantially underspent); the legislative history of the Act--and the Act's language--indicate considerable Congressional concern that the funds be spent on those eligible

and most in need of employment and training services, and it specifically mentions dropout youth teenage parents and juvenile offenders. None of these intentions or provisions has been fulfilled. The Act lists numerous exemplary programs for youth that could be tried--an unusual amount of detail for federal legislation--but almost none of these programs have been implemented to any substantial degree by local jurisdictions.

Another part of the shift can also be explained by reduced confidence in the effectiveness of some second-chance programming. The Supported Work Demonstration results, available in 1980, indicated that work experience alone did not have any positive long-term impact on the employment, earnings or living patterns of dropout youth. The YEDPA research results were not yet available in 1980.

But the major reason for the shift had to do with neither funding levels nor research results; nor in fact was it due to any factor specifically related to second-chance youth programming. The shift was primarily a result of reaction to CETA's poor public image as a fraud-ridden, make-work, income-transfer program that was ineffective in producing private-sector job placements at low costs. That reaction produced a replacement act--JTPA--which, in its attempt to remedy CETA's ills, accomplished the following:

- It required that 70 percent of expenditures go directly to training activities, and that the remaining 30 percent be split between administration and support services. Under CETA support services had averaged almost 25 percent, and were particularly high in second-chance youth programs. In addition, youth programs, except those for older youth, are typically not centered on skills training. Thus JTPA's basic direction on expenditures limited its programmatic options in dealing with at-risk youth;

- It completed the trend begun in various CETA amendments since 1980 to reduce work experience as a program component by requiring that its funding come from a local jurisdiction's administrative funds--funds which were reduced under JTPA to 15 percent of expenditures (compared to CETA's 20 percent)--and thus effectively eliminated work experience, which was used in most second-chance youth programs as a major component;

- It allowed the Department of Labor to establish quantitative performance standards by which local performance would be judged. The standards required positive terminations for more than four out of every five youth enrolled in JTPA--almost

ensuring that there would be very little focus on at-risk youth--and limited expenditures to no more than $4,900 for every positive termination;

- It established a local governance structure that gave volunteer local business representatives at least a veto of local government plans for JTPA and the right to take the lead on such plans if they desired--a structure unlikely to produce a strong emphasis on second-chance youth programming, given the business sector's historic and understandable reluctance to hire at-risk youth in any large-scale and systematic fashion.

JTPA's reduced funding, restricted programmatic flexibility, business-oriented governance structure and emphasis on both low unit costs and high placement rates worked against any serious commitment to second-chance youth programming, even while the legislation's stated rhetorical goals and congressional history indicated a serious commitment to dealing with at-risk youth. As noted earlier, in JTPA's case, the rhetoric lost out to the realities of the Act's structure and to its execution by the Department of Labor.

Actual local performance under JTPA vis-a-vis youth in general, and especially at-risk youth, has been even more restricted than what might have been expected. Table II.2, for example, shows performance and expenditures on youth programming during the first two major operating periods under JTPA. Note that though the act allows $4,900 to be spent per positive youth termination, actual expenditures were substantially less.

Likewise, the performance standards required that only about two-fifths of youth terminations be actual job placements, and allowed local jurisdictions to set up "competency standards" by which to judge a youth's progress and success--thus encouraging the enrollment of at-risk youth, who might not be ready for regular job placement after a brief intervention. Local jurisdictions largely ignored this flexibility to establish competency standards and focused almost totally on job placements, placing almost two-thirds of all youth participants in jobs rather than the two-fifths the performance standards called for. And, as noted earlier, the percent of alloted youth monies actually spent was alarmingly low, despite historically high rates of unemployment and low rates of labor force involvement by poor youth.

TABLE II.2

Performance and Expenditures
on Youth Under JTPA

	Federal Standard	Actual Performance Transition Year	FY 1984
Entered Employment Rate	41%	64%	66%
Positive Termination Rate	82%	71%	74%
Cost per Pos. Term.	$4,900	$3,145	$3,037
Youth Expenditures	100%	63%	68%

SOURCE: An Independent Sector Assessment of the Job Training Partnership Act, Grinker/Walker Associates, 1986.

The focus on low unit cost and high placement performance was accompanied, as might be expected, by a lack of targeting on at-risk youth, and little emphasis on the creation of special youth programs. More than three-quarters of the youth who have been served by JTPA are in school or are high school graduates. Less than 2 percent of the funds expended have been used to provide remedial education services. Only 9 percent of expenditures have been for support services. And less than a quarter of local jurisdictions have opted to serve 14- to 15-year-olds, which is allowed in the legislation.

Local assessment of JTPA performance corroborates the statistics. As Table II.3 indicates, local public and private officials who participated in JTPA have been primarily impressed by placement and cost performance, by efficient management practices, by JTPA's public image and by the level of business participation. They have been least impressed by JTPA's capacity to have an impact on critical local social problems like those represented by at-risk youth.

The shift away from support for second-chance programming has had serious consequences not only for those youth who could benefit from such services, but also for the institutional and personnel infrastructure, and the operational and research knowledge which was being developed at the time the shift took place. Much of that is now dismantled or lost.

TABLE II.3

Local Assessment of Key JTPA Achievements

1.	Placement and Cost Performance	(86%)
2.	Management Practices	(80%)
3.	Public Image	(72%)
4.	Business Participation	(68%)
5.	Smooth Transition from CETA	(40%)
6.	Public/Private Sector Cooperation	(20%)
7.	Impact on Key Local Problems	(8%)

SOURCE: An Independent Sector Assessment of the Job Training Partnership Act, Grinker/Walker Associates, 1986.

Like any effort dealing with a hard problem--whether it be locating and drilling for offshore oil, launching a space shuttle, or bringing at-risk youth into the mainstream of the country's economic and social life--it is necessary to have an infrastructure of organization, techniques, equipment and personnel; a willingness to take risks; and a strategy for research and communications that ensures that valuable lessons are candidly recorded and communicated. These elements take time to build and cannot be turned on and off and still produce results. Because of the time necessary for infrastructure capacity to mature, this loss may be the most serious result of the shift away from second-chance programs. Certainly, political commitment and funding can change much more rapidly.

The lack of support for second-chance programming under JTPA does not, of course, mean that there has been no activity in this area over the past five years. A few jurisdictions have used local tax levy money to create and support second-chance efforts for at-risk youth. New York City is notable in this regard, having committed almost $10 million per year to fund a special work/ remediation effort for the at-risk youth who were not served by JTPA. And almost 30 state and local jurisdictions have set up youth corps programs over the past five years which, though not targeted to at-risk youth are at least available to them. Business groups and schools have also set up special programs for at-risk youth in many urban communities, though these are few and tend to be small.

But these non-federally supported efforts are modest in both funding and the number of youth reached; in aggregate they do not serve even a modest fraction of the number of youth in a year that

a single federal effort like CETA or JTPA can reach (the youth corps programs, for example, serve only around 10,000 youth annually). In addition, they are scattered, largely unconnected by regularized channels of communication and not subject to rigorous assessment. Thus they do not have much potential for advancing the state of practice or knowledge in second-chance programming.

As noted at the beginning of this section, there is currently a revival of concern and interest in second-chance programming, as expressed in the media and by public- and private-sector leaders. This renewed expression of concern has not yet resulted in anything substantial and concrete. But it may constitute a more hospitable environment than has existed over the past five years in which to design and implement second-chance youth efforts.

Certainly these efforts are needed, as the numbers indicate. The current interest in preventive youth programming, though certainly sensible, will not substantially affect or reduce the number of at-risk youth for years to come. Basic reform in major systems does not happen immediately. And there are no signs that the problems that produce at-risk youth are decreasing.

But the first step in building a new and sound strategy for second-chance youth programming is a careful assessment of what can be gleaned from the practice and research of the previous commitment to such programming.

THE CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

The centerpiece of the Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act was "knowledge development." Besides its other (often conflicting) aims, YEDPA was to test a number of approaches for dealing with youth joblessness and, through a program of research, to compile information about their effectiveness; in short, to find out "what works."

Whether YEDPA's aims could have been realized under the best of circumstances is doubtful. The Knowledge Development Plan originally framed to guide research efforts in YEDPA was an ambitious statement; under ideal circumstances it might have consumed twice the resources it was allocated, and twice the time. But the hurried pace of activity under YEDPA, its shifting legislative emphases and the paucity of institutions capable of assisting in such an effort, and the abrupt truncation of much of the research led to results that disappointed many in the field.

The newly formed Office of Youth Programs (the unit in the Labor Department responsible for YEDPA) faced dual pressures: to get programs started and to compile a useful body of research in an

unrealistically short period of time. The final results inevitably leave room for criticism when they are measured against the costs of the enterprise.

In 1983, the National Research Council (a component of the National Academy of Sciences) was asked to review the results of YEDPA research and report on what had been learned under the initiative. Its report (which, for its thoroughness as well as its compilation of information about YEDPA, is a valuable contribution to the field) found disappointingly little in the way of conclusive findings, and less in the way of positive results.

Tables II.4 and II.5 summarize the report's key findings. It is essential, in reviewing these tables, to bear in mind the report's major caveat: one should not infer that a program is ineffective simply because (as was true in a number of instances) the research evidence was inadequate to support a judgment one way or the other.

A detailed perusal of the evidence for each program type is recommended for those wishing to understand limitations or other qualifications beyond those listed here. Summary interpretations of these results are risky at best, yet several general observations are in order:

1. The number of approaches for which results have been obtained is limited. The outcome measures are based on only a dozen or so programs, and on just a few basic types;

2. Within this limited framework, it appears that, overall, several basic approaches were proven successful for out-of-school as well as in-school youth;

3. The evidence speaks principally of short-term effects; in general long-term effects either failed to occur or were not measured;

4. Comparability of findings across program types is limited. This, coupled with the sparseness of the research framework, makes generalizations about the findings difficult.

The difficulties in interpretation are aggravated when one adds a second major source of findings: summary CETA results based on an analysis of the Continuous Longitudinal Manpower Survey (CLMS). Complications arise from the different kinds of aggregations these

Table II.4

Summary of National Research Council
Review of YEDPA Program Effectiveness

A. Effects on In-School Youth

TYPE OF PROGRAM	KEY RESULTS	PROGRAMS CITED	COMMENTS
Occupational Skills Training	. Evidence limited, but shows no effects on employment or earnings.	. New Youth Initiatives in Apprenticeship	. Program reviewed was specialized enough to warrant caution in generalizing results.
Labor Market Preparation	. No conclusions can be drawn about effects.	. OIC . National Puerto Rican Forum . Project Redirection	. Research was of low quality; even best of studies was flawed. . Programs frequently had diffuse aims, not just increasing employment and earnings.
Temporary Jobs Program	. In-program effects on employment and earnings. . No evidence on long-term employment and earnings effects. . No impact on school retention or completion.	. Entitlement . Summer Youth Employment Program	. Entitlement effect on reducing employment gaps between blacks and whites. . No summer youth evidence available regarding school retention.
Job Placement Programs	. Short-term (1 yr.) effects on employment and earnings. . Effect disappears by 2 yrs. after participation.	. Jobs for Delaware Graduates . Jobs for America's Graduates	. Programs served largely non-disadvantaged population. . Programs are non-stipended

Table II.5

Summary of National Research Council
Findings Regarding YEDPA Program Effectiveness

B. Effects on Out-of-School Youth

TYPE OF PROGRAM	KEY RESULTS	PROGRAMS CITED	COMMENTS
Occupational Skills Training	. For residential programs: gains in employment and earnings and educational attainment. . Positive benefits/costs.	. Job Corps	. No evidence exists on effectiveness of non-residential programs.
Labor Market Preparation	. Some positive effects on employment and earnings 3-8 months after participation. . No evidence on long-term effects.	. Alternative Youth Employment Strategies . Recruitment & Training Program . Project STEADY	. Dropouts and high school graduates pooled. . Findings may be influenced by outcomes of graduates.
Temporary Jobs Programs	. In-program increases in employment and earnings. . Effective operation of subsidized programs & jobs of high quality. . Strong evidence of no long-term gain in employment and earnings. . No effect on educational attainment.	. VICI . Supported Work	
Job Placement Programs	. Short-term (1 yr.) effects on employment and earnings. . Effects disappear by 2 yrs. after participation.	. 70001 . Job Factory	

data use (in particular, results by age are unrefined); the different program streams on which they are based (the CLMS results provide data, for example on OJT, that are not found directly in the NRC study); and comparison group issues. Table II.6 displays the key points emerging from two reviews of these data. The Urban Institute's data is probably preferable because it attempted to compile results specifically for youth. These data agree generally on several broad points:

- Overall, youth derive little if any long-term benefit from participating in CETA programs, with negative results for males;
- Young women--minorities in particular--do benefit from OJT programs;
- Work experience programs produce significant negative or insignificant net impacts for all youth groups.

It should be noted that these latter results are broadly comparable (though more detailed) with those of the earlier Manpower Development and Training Act (see Perry, Anderson, et. al., 1976 and Stromsdorfer, 1980). These prior analyses (which provide little discrete evidence on youth impacts) also identify occupational training (at least for adults) as having positive effects on earnings. Likewise, Taggart (1981) argues forcefully that skills training (both classroom and OJT) produces substantial benefits for the majority of age, sex and race classes (based on his own analyses of CLMS data); and that these benefits increase as duration in the program increases.

These findings, in toto, represent a somewhat unwieldy mixture of facts known and unknown, and of positive and negative findings. On some points there is little ambiguity: the ineffectiveness of work experience alone, and the apparent "return on investment" in skills training. On other, more interesting points, the web of evidence is sparse. Do combinations of treatment elements work, and for whom? Is there a desirable sequence of program elements that produces better results? How does the age (or school status) of the participant affect the services to be offered?

A useful complement to the quantitative findings is a substantial body of qualitative evidence on program implementation, as well as the cumulative knowledge and experience of professionals in the second-chance network. The views of most practitioners and research observers converge on a number of principles that, together with the hard (though limited) quantitative evidence available, suggest how programs can best be arrayed.

TABLE II.6

Findings from the Continuous Longitudinal Manpower Survey Regarding Effectiveness of CETA Programs for Youth

A. Urban Institute Review

- Earnings losses for young men overall, and no significant impacts for women
- Significant negative or insignificant net impacts for all groups in work experience
- Significant positive impacts for females, especially minority females in public service employment or on-the-job training
- Earnings gains result from increased time in the labor force, time employed, and hours worked, rather than from increased hourly wage

B. SRI Review

- Significantly lower post-program earnings for young men, insignificant gains for young women
- Young women benefit from on-the-job training
- Work experience has significant negative impacts for all age and sex subgroups
- Post-program probability of employment higher for both sexes
- Length of stay has a positive impact on post-program earnings, and placement on leaving the programs leads to positive earning gains

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Source: National Research Council, 1985

The principles may be summarized as follows:

1. No single program approach solves all youth unemployment problems. The complexities of the problems and the limitation of programming knowledge probably rule out the discovery of such a panacea in the future.

2. Programs with several service elements are likelier to produce results than single-service efforts. Thus, work experience, ineffective in itself, offers synergistic potential when offered with other program elements such as labor market preparation or skills training. Similarly, a coherent array of programs is usually needed to serve the multiple and varying needs of a community's at-risk youth population.

3. Programs with longer durations are likelier to produce more lasting effects. Likewise, actual length of stay in the program is generally correlated to results, a vexing issue in view of the generally high rate of attrition most (even the best) programs experience.

4. Youths' needs tend to follow a sequence by age, with education-based services most appropriate for younger youth and services oriented toward the labor market (skills training in particular) most appropriate for older youth.

5. Targeting program efforts on the neediest groups has strong and clear payoffs, and is an essential element of a youth employment strategy.

6. The prevention of school leaving should be a pivotal aim of youth programming. This is a troubling point since our knowledge of how to conduct in-school dropout prevention programs is sparse.

7. The quality of program design, staff and operations is key to a program's success, as is the stability of program operations and funding over time.

Many of these principles may seem self-evident today. Ten years ago they were not, and the ability to describe them as received wisdom now is a measure of the knowledge development YEDPA and earlier research actually produced, however limited their more definitive findings. Our state of knowledge and practice in many ways may still be frustratingly limited, but there at least is a base of knowledge broad enough to shape and guide efforts to serve disadvantaged youth.

THE STATE OF PRACTICE: WHAT SHOWS PROMISE, WHAT WORKS

To illustrate both the possibilities and the limitations of our current knowledge, we have selected a group of programs representative of the best efforts in current practice. Together they constitute an idealized service "framework" which has the following aims:

- It should serve the full spectrum of youth ranging in age from 14 to 24;
- It should offer reasonably complete coverage of program elements and combinations of those elements;
- It should serve both in-school and out-of-school youth;
- It should permit matching of youth to programs on the bases of both age and need.

The programs selected meet two criteria: they provide multiple services (two or more from among five general types); and they have clear goals and a program design consistent with those goals. Beyond that, the programs chosen either have been research-validated or show clear promise of effectiveness, either on the basis of research in progress or on our own/others' observations and opinions of the programs.

This last "criterion" reflects a difficult, though quite common dilemma: how to select effective programs to be practiced in the real world. Conclusive scientific "evidence," however preferred it may be as the means of choosing programs, permits too few choices. Practitioners must rely on their own judgment, informed as much as possible by the "principles of practice" listed above. The programs here are chosen to represent the best insights from the research as well as the best applications of those principles.

Table II.7 presents key characteristics of this illustrative framework. Summary descriptions of the programs listed there are presented in Appendix A. A general observation regarding most programs listed is that they are established--most have been in existence at least five years, and the Job Corps is over 20 years old. The two research-demonstration projects (each of which addresses a specific issue raised by the NRC report), are less than three years old, making them the youngest members of the group.

The list is weighted toward long-term (longer than six months) programs. Work experience is used purely as a complement to other appropriate services, and the framework reflects the principle of reserving skills training for older youth.

TABLE II.7

AN ILLUSTRATIVE FRAMEWORK OF SECOND-CHANCE PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	AGE TYPICALLY SERVED	SCHOOL STATUS		PLANNED DURATION[1]		NUMBER SERVED ANNUALLY	PROGRAM ELEMENTS[2]					AVAILABLE EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS
		IN-SCHOOL	OUT-OF-SCHOOL	SHORT-TERM	LONG-TERM		BASIC SKILLS	WORK EXPERIENCE	LABOR MARKET PREPARATION	SUPPORT SERVICES	OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING	
CITIES IN SCHOOLS	10-18	●			●	6,600	●			●		DESCRIPTIVE
SUMMER TRAINING AND AND EDUCATION PROGRAM[3]	14-16	●			●	750	●	●		●		EXPERIMENTAL[5] DESCRIPTIVE
PHILA. HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIES	14-18	●			●	1,500	●	●	●	●	●	DESCRIPTIVE
70001	16-21		●	●		6,000	●	●	●	●		EXPERIMENTAL DESCRIPTIVE
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL OCCUPATIONAL CENTERS	16-18[4]	●		●	●	300,000		●	●		●	DESCRIPTIVE
JOB CORPS	16-21		●		●	63,000	●	●	●	●	●	EXPERIMENTAL DESCRIPTIVE
JOBSTART[3]	17-21		●		●	1,500	●			●	●	DESCRIPTIVE[5]
YOUTH SERVICE CORPS	18-25		●		●	>10,000		●	●			DESCRIPTIVE
COMPREHENSIVE COMPETENCIES PROGRAM	14-24	●	●	●	●	>10,000	●		●			IN-PROGRAM DATA

1. SHORT-TERM IS SIX MONTHS OR LESS
2. PRINCIPAL EMPHASIS OF PROGRAM
3. DEMONSTRATION RESEARCH PROJECT
4. TEN PERCENT OF THOSE SERVED ARE ADULTS
5. PRELIMINARY ONLY

An anomaly in the list is the Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP), which is not actually a "program" but an exhaustively detailed competency-based skills curriculum with a carefully prescribed delivery format. It has been replicated in more than 200 sites nationally, often used to provide remedial basic skills in tandem with other second-chance programs. (Some JOBSTART sites will be utilizing CCP to provide their basic skills services).

Experimental evidence of impact does not exist for most of these programs. Most, however, are or have been the subject of at least some qualitative research, and the two demonstrations will be the subject of extensive qualitative and quantitative investigations.

Several observations regarding this framework are in order. First, comparatively few youth are served by this set of "proven and promising" programs. The listed numbers are national totals; in any community only a few of these programs might be present, serving only a small number of youngsters. Though very few places have made concerted efforts to coordinate services to meet the full spectrum of needs (the Boston Compact being the best-known example), in most communities, services are incommensurate with need, fragmented and of varying quality.

Second, these programs focus overwhelmingly on employability development. Such an emphasis, which has been consistent throughout most of the history of second-chance programs, tends nonetheless to be one-dimensional, and slights human development factors in favor of employment-related ones.

For example, Table II.7 indicates that support services are an element of nearly every one of the programs. The rationale for their inclusion is unquestioned. The young people who participate in these programs routinely have social and/or behavioral problems serious enough that they cannot be met by narrowly conceived employment programs.

Yet the actual quality, mix and appropriateness of such services vary widely. And often enough they become secondary in importance, as they are offered only on a referral basis. A coherent perspective on human development issues that would enrich and even suggest new approaches is largely lacking in second-chance programs.

A final point to note is the centrality of basic reading and math skills in the employment and training equation. Though long emphasized by research, the importance of addressing such needs systematically and effectively has begun to receive focused attention only in the past several years. This may reflect a related current: renewed interest in attacking the school dropout problem, through both preventive and corrective measures.

JTPA's performance standards continue to make funding for basic skills activities problematic, yet the law's recent amendments calling on states to use summer youth funds to provide remediation is an encouraging straw in the wind and may presage greater emphasis on basic skills down the road.

NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE EIGHTIES

The programs discussed in the previous section reflect the best of what is available in current practice. Along with these one should also note some intriguing new directions in programming. These "trends" are both diffuse and embryonic, and their connection and likely effect on second-chance programming are unclear. Yet no survey of the current state of such programming would be complete without a cursory look at them.

1. Education Reform

The decade's interest in schooling issues has centered on the "education reform movement." Its beginning dates more or less from the issue in 1983 of A Nation at Risk, which highlighted failures in American education and offered recommendations for reform, including raising academic standards, lengthening the school year, and improving pay and status for teachers. It was followed by nearly a dozen reports over the next year, each echoing the general reform theme (and usually the somewhat alarmist tone) of the first, and presenting ideas for change.

These reports raised public awareness of the problems, and prompted a wave of reform activities among state governments and legislatures. Most of the 50 states have taken steps to implement at least some of the recommendations in these reports. Typically these changes have focused on raising standards, either for promotion or graduation. Far fewer states have tackled the more difficult issues of teacher certification and substantial increases in educational funding levels.

For at-risk youth, some of these changes may be deleterious. Levin (1985) has argued that increasing promotion/graduation standards without adding resources to help failing students achieve them simply raises failure and dropout rates for these youth. More generally, reforms that do not explicitly address the needs of at-risk students are likely to serve best those who may need the reforms least.

Recent attention has moved from the reform movement to the question of dropouts and low achievers. This latter direction, if it can be well-channeled and sustained, may provide the catalyst for better coordination among education and employment training institutions--coordination necessary to address dropout needs on a

scale commensurate with their severity and to extend educational reform to those who are hardest to serve.

2. State-Level Initiatives

The deemphasis of the federal role under the Reagan administration was accompanied by an increase in the responsibilities of the states. In many cases this latter increase was by default: the federal government simply reduced funding levels for its own programs in the human service and education areas. The Job Training Partnership Act, by contrast, reflected a more deliberate attempt to return decision-making and administrative authority to the states.

Educational reform measures represent perhaps the most frequently encountered type of state-level initiative. These have, in most cases, relied solely on education departments for their implementation. The second most common initiatives are the youth service corps programs sponsored by states (some 30 programs are in planning or operating phases). The emphasis on quality work and service that the best corps offer, and their potential to enroll substantial numbers of at-risk youth, make these programs a promising avenue for solving the at-risk youth unemployment problem.

Of perhaps greater interest are efforts in several states to draw human services into a coherent framework for serving at-risk youth. The most successful (in Oregon and Colorado) use state-level coordinating councils, representing the key youth-serving agencies, to identify needs, blend resources, and direct these resources to support model programs. Several other states, including Wisconsin, Connecticut and Massachusetts have instituted similar approaches.

P/PV's evaluation of a three-state demonstration (Public/Private Ventures, 1986) suggests both the difficulties of this approach and the potential it offers when successfully implemented. It is true that the service "levers" reside at the state level, but it is unclear whether the political momentum and will to use them concertedly can be found.

3. Teen Parenting

Though teenage birth rates have declined since the 1950's, teenage pregnancy remains a serious problem. In 1982, there were more than 522,000 births to women under age 20, and almost 10,000 were to girls under age 15 (Children's Defense Fund, 1985: 4). The percentage of those births to unwed mothers has increased dramatically. Now more than half of all teen births are to unwed mothers. And though birth rates are chronically high for young blacks, the fastest recent increases have occurred among young whites.

The relationship between parenting and leaving school for girls is clear and available evidence suggests that parenting may also affect dropout decisions for boys. Moreover, substantial evidence links early parenting to lifelong poverty and dependency.

Thus prevention of teen parenting is an issue that has gained increased public attention, and it may find an important niche in the network of second-chance programs. The Summer Training and Education Program includes a curriculum designed to promote responsible social and sexual behavior, and hence to reduce first pregnancies. The Center for Population Options (and other organizations) have developed and are disseminating such curricula to schools and community-based organizations. And experiments with school-based clinics may prove to be effective--if controversial--means for attacking the problem in school settings.

4. Preventive Strategies and Middle Schools

The general concern to reduce the numbers both of school dropouts and teen parents has sparked interest in preventive strategies and a focus on the middle school level as a programmatic medium. The logic is appealing. Many experts, for example, believe that 14 is already too old an age to change the behaviors that lead to unprotected sex. Likewise, some argue that many at-risk youth are already so estranged from schooling that dropout "prevention" efforts at the high school level will prove inadequate.

As interventions reach further and further back in age and grade, their status as "employment" programs becomes attenuated. At the same time, the range of behavioral, social and educational factors that might legitimately be selected as the crux of an intervention increases greatly. Unlike employment and training, where the basic ideas are at least clear, (even if not all the mechanisms are fully understood or tested), designs for early prevention programs lack clear and agreed-upon rationales.

Moreover, since most of such programs will be strongly tied to the school setting, broader issues that pertain to educational aims and institutions come into play. Nonetheless, the middle school represents an attractive--if largely unexplored--area in which interest is beginning to develop.

III. KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT REVISITED: INITIATIVES FOR THE NEXT DECADE

A regrettable by-product of the jettisoning of CETA and YEDPA in 1981 is the disrepute into which the concept "knowledge development" has fallen. As the preceding section of this paper--and any review of the field--makes clear, our base of knowledge regarding effective second-chance programs is small and uneven, even as the need for action remains strong and constant.

Moreover, the efficacy of even the best programs is mixed and limited. We are indeed fortunate to have found in the Job Corps a program that does so much for those it serves. Yet only one in four of its graduates earns a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). That achievement, though, far exceeds the record of similar youth who go unserved: only one in 20 earns a GED. These facts should remind us that, in many respects, we still have a long way to go.

Hence in this section we present some broad recommendations for knowledge development through both research and programs. These reflect our best selection of areas that respond to significant gaps in our knowledge and practice, or that hold promise for programming in the future. No attempt has been made to erect a framework in which research and program initiatives are chosen to complement each other perfectly. Such an approach would likely prove too rigid and arbitrary in view of the fragmentary state of current knowledge.

Instead, we have selected areas of inquiry--to be addressed either by research or programming--that answer important questions or hold substantial promise for enriching our understanding of how program initiatives can help at-risk youth. Our hope in presenting them is not to limit, but rather to catalyze and expand the search for new thinking, programs and understanding.

Before sketching these areas, a few comments regarding the current practice of research are worthwhile. The first is that, while developing solid quantitative evidence on impacts and effectiveness remains an essential function, the ideal research agenda will not be restricted to such efforts.

Despite the appeal of its rigor, such research informs public policy only in the broadest sense. Specific policy choices seldom await the results of long-term research, though it may influence them in general ways. Moreover, the high cost of such enterprises --particularly longitudinal studies that provide crucial evidence about long-term effectiveness and impact--will always limit their application to a few programs.

The findings from such studies too are usually far from simple to understand and to apply. In the operational realm, practitioners

need sharper tools to assess programs quickly and soundly, and better insights into the youth they hope to serve.

This suggests the need for two initiatives. The first is to develop a more coherent set of methods for short-term program assessments. Case studies, implementation analyses and qualitative evaluations have been the mainstay of such research in the past. Yet there is little agreement about the structure, content and quality of such work; whether a consistent set of standards could be developed and applied to varied classes of programs; and what the "rules of evidence" should be that guide such efforts and permit judgments about their evaluative validity. The development of such methods seems a worthwhile and useful goal for research over the next decade.

The second is to expand the role of ethnographic studies. The staple of youth employment research has been the objective report, whether about program operations or results, and descriptions (by aggregate characteristics) of the youth population or programs, etc. Traditionally the field has eschewed ethnographic methodology and findings. These approaches, which depend on carefully trained field observers, are designed more to depict the perceptions and perspectives of (in this case) the youth themselves, perceptions about their own lives and environments, and about schooling, work and other institutional contacts they have.

The insights of this approach are both intriguing in themselves and have heuristic value both in thinking through program design and research results. The work of Elijah Anderson (1980, 1985) and Sullivan (1985) are instructive examples of an approach that deserves to be more fully tried. Not only can they broaden our knowledge and perspective, but these approaches can also expand the sorts of questions and issues that can be fruitfully explored.

These recommendations, we believe, would enhance both the quality and diversity of all research efforts in the youth employment field. They may, in a number of instances, also support the following specific initiatives which we propose for knowledge development over the next decade.

1. <u>Human Development Approaches</u>

Our recommendation here can be simply stated: explore ways to make second-chance programs more "holistic," particularly ways to balance their employment focus with human development enrichments. The needs of most at-risk youngsters are broad and multi-faceted. Their deficiencies in the workplace are usually complicated by marked social and behavioral problems. If they are to achieve meaningful roles at work and in society, the "second chances" they are offered must be responsive to and commensurate with their needs.

Two broad strategies seem to be indicated. The first is to develop methods for enriching many of our existing programs. As a prerequisite, well-defined research into characteristics and rationales of support service is needed. Little systematic study has been done on the various supportive services participants are offered, and how closely these may approximate their real needs. Regarding certain obvious ones--transportation and child care--the issue is reasonably clear-cut. Yet a host of other questions can be posed:

- What kind of "counseling" (a ubiquitous category in employment training programs) is appropriate and helpful? What existing programs or approaches might provide content or quality standards that could be successfully incorporated into second-chance programs?

- To what extent and in what form should medical/psychological services be made available?

- Can the families of at-risk youth be strengthened as part of the programs in which the youth participate?

- Do certain institutions--for example, community-based organizations--have special roles to play in provision of services?

- How much should services be built into programs, instead of being offered (as they usually now are) on a referral basis?

The fields of counseling, education, social work and psychology are ample sources for materials and ideas. These fields have not been systematically explored or assessed from the perspective of second-chance employment programs. They and the theoretical literature that support them offer ample opportunities to learn more and do better, and efforts to examine those fields for their lessons in second-chance programming deserve support.

A closely related issue in the rubric of second-chance programs centers on how to "motivate" youth to do well, and what incentives will induce appropriate behavior in programs, in school and in the workplace. In this area, too, theories and practice are usually more casual than reasoned. Yet the issues, broadly construed, are pivotal human concerns, with strong practical dimensions. They touch on such questions as how to motivate youth to remain in school, to avoid pregnancy or crime, or to stay on the job.

One step to learning more about incentives and motivation is research, especially in the substantial literature on motivational issues in the psychology field. In addition, fieldwork--including interviews, surveys and ethnographic studies--would help to broaden

and enrich our understanding. Finally, program experiments that test a number of promising ideas could make a significant contribution to practice.

These recommendations will enhance our existing programs. A second broad strategy would be to identify and try out new program models whose major focus is on human development. In the second-chance field these are rare. Yet several possibilities offer avenues for further exploration.

One is intergenerational programs. These have sprung up with increasing frequency over the past 10 years, usually as instruments to enrich the lives of senior citizens or to engage their talents, knowledge, productive energy and wisdom in such fields as education, child care and social services.

A few now seek to improve the lives of youth by drawing on the personal dimension of such programs, and the positive roles it permits youth to play. The extent to which this latter aspect can be successfully expanded is unknown; reliable research in the area is just beginning.

In tandem with research, some modest pilot programs could be tried that seek to expand program strategies to assist at-risk youngsters in ways that foster growth and positive attitudes toward themselves and others. Such programs would represent a large increment to the diversity and resources now available in second-chance programs if their effectiveness can be established and replicable program elements or models can be well identified.

A second possibility may lie in approaches like the East Harlem Youth Action Program. Here the emphasis is not narrowly focused on education or employability development. Instead the programs emphasize instilling self-confidence and a sense of responsibility and control--empowerment--in participating youth. For example, youngsters rehabilitate neighborhood housing and convert it to shelters for the homeless, which they operate (and may themselves live in). They work directly with students in problem schools to restore discipline and order on a peer basis. They participate in decisions about grant applications and may assist in preparing them.

The approach is an intriguing one, as yet unresearched; an assessment of the program seems highly desirable. A major objective of any research should be to determine how much the "empowerment" dimension of the program contributes to results, and how much it can be replicated elsewhere. If such an approach is found effective and useful in helping a broad spectrum of at-risk youngsters (in-school, dropouts, adjudicated youth, etc.), it may provide the seed for a new departure for program design in the future.

2. Dropout Prevention Approaches

School dropouts are probably the most seriously at risk. Finding ways to serve them effectively has proved a vexing task that has yielded few successes. It has, though, contributed to renewed efforts to prevent youth from dropping out of school in the first place.

There are a plethora of dropout prevention programs, most of them small and with untested results. The problems both in design and research are numerous. How does one reliably identify the individual who may be a potential dropout, even with our knowledge of dropout-related factors? How can one determine if the programs "work," short of extensive long-term follow-up? How are dropouts "counted" from district to district and how does that affect program results? The hypotheses about what prompts a young person to leave school are plentiful, and these in turn influence program design.

A research appraisal of the state of our knowledge would do much to clarify and assemble the knowledge available to us. This would in turn guide development of models that were based on findings and experience. The most promising among these, with both public and foundation support, should be implemented through a national demonstration.

There are also immediate steps to be taken that stem from current interest in educational reform. One appealing idea, called the Accelerated Schools Program, is being started experimentally in a few schools in California. Its aim is to guarantee that every youngster in the target schools reads at grade level by the sixth grade--an essential ingredient for later academic success and school retention. Every resource available to achieve this aim will be exploited: new curriculum, lengthened school days, enlisting the active support of parents and of volunteer tutors. The critical first phase of the program (now underway) is the joint agreement by school personnel and parents on goals and means to achieve those goals.

Such a program is simple to understand and to develop support for. It provides a clear standard that can be agreed upon, though implementation itself will undoubtedly prove far from simple. Yet if it can be made to work, it will have much to say about early intervention strategies elsewhere.

Such an approach can be broadened, though the difficulties multiply enormously as one seeks to expand to high schools and to a district-wide approach. Such an undertaking would require substantial incentives and continuing fiscal support. Yet it, too, could be focused on clear objectives that would ensure the education of all youth.

The major elements of such an initiative would be the following:

- A publicly stated commitment on the part of school superintendents and other elected officials to strengthen and improve the performance of schools in serving all youngsters, at every stratum of performance;

- Organization and reporting of key performance measures--test score performance, school-by-school performance--so that results for the best and worst performers (for example, top quintile scorers and lowest quintile scorers) are explicitly reported and acted on. In particular, this approach would require extra resources to be directed to serve bottom quintile students;

- Awarding resources to those schools, administrators and teachers that are succeeding on performance measures, weighted by their success in improving school performance among bottom quintile scorers;

- The use of clear, uniform measures of school registration and attendance so that "true" dropout rates can be computed and used along with other benchmarks to judge success;

- Development of dropout "re-entry" strategies for schools' use, again with clear reporting of results.

Beyond rigorous enforcement of those standards, the initiative would permit substantial local autonomy in deciding on curriculum, organization (e.g. expansion of alternative school programs or schools-within-schools) and accountability. The undertaking would be a lengthy one, to permit institutional changes to be implemented and to take root. Yet the goals are critical, the means entirely within reach, and the likely payoffs for all youth high and lasting. Such an initiative should command strong consideration in an agenda of action programs.

3. Middle School Interventions

The logic of preventive efforts points to the middle school as a promising--though largely uncharted--medium for programs to identify and provide intensive services to at-risk youngsters. The challenges posed by this approach are considerable. There is little consensus on what the precise aims of such an initiative might be, and hence on the programmatic means that should be developed and tried. The need for better knowledge is accordingly great, and to develop it, both research and experimentation seem appropriate.

Research should seek to develop a more coherent understanding of how social, behavioral, educational and psychological factors come into play, and how successfully they can be incorporated into school-based programs. How does one reliably identify at an early age these youngsters who will fail at schooling and work later on? What combinations of services--social, medical, psychological, educational--will work to enhance their chances for success? The extensive basic research literature that speaks to these questions must be rigorously explored, and in many cases expanded upon.

Experimental programs can focus on those areas where there is some consensus, at least. Well-researched pilot programs could be designed to provide the following services and activities:

- Intensive family and in-school counseling;
- Medical services through expanded school clinics, which can assist, as appropriate, in providing family planning, psychological counseling and other services;
- Well designed instructional regimens that are remedial without being stigmatizing;
- Focused instruction in life skills and sexual decision-making, specifically to counter early child-bearing.

Careful documentation of the programs will be as important as obtaining measures of success for such pilot efforts. Their ultimate value will lie at least as much in the knowledge they provide about how such programs can be implemented in the future as in the difference they make in the lives of the young people they serve.

4. <u>Directing Resources More Effectively</u>

The resources available to second-chance programming have historically been small and inefficiently used. The problems of making categorical, single-purpose funding streams mesh and interact effectively continue to hamper service delivery for at-risk youth. The gulf between education and employment training is a commonly noted one, but just as real are the failures of human services, public assistance and criminal justice to connect their activities and resources in a coordinated, effective way. The states remain a largely untapped vehicle for achieving such coordination. Though a few noteworthy efforts hold promise--the Oregon service coordination effort, state-sponsored youth service corps, California's Regional Occupational Program, and several state educational initiatives--state-level efforts remain sparse, and interest in them limited.

This seems a promising area for both public and foundation initiatives. Sponsorship (in whole or in part) of state-initiated programs is a necessar incentive to spark interest and activity. This should initially take the form of support for replication of those efforts that already have shown promise, with the aim of later support for new initiatives.

A related initiative worth consideration on the local level is a concentrated programming strategy. Though at-risk youth are a national problem, their national distribution is uneven. A considerable fraction of youth who are the targets of second-chance programs reside in the 15 to 20 largest U.S. cities. It is in fact the concentrations of such youth (and the concomitant mismatch in those cities between need and resources) that makes their problems particularly hard to overcome.

To respond to this dilemma, a major infusion of resources should be directed to a target group of cities that house these large pools of needy youth. Unlike Entitlement, the intent would be to build a full program infrastructure at a level of services far closer to the level of need than available resources now permit. A particular emphasis would be placed on the dropout population, although the overall scale would be broad enough to provide preventive services to in-school, dropout-prone youth as well.

The broadest possible mix of programs would be supported (using a framework similar to the one discussed in Section II) and efforts would be tailored to the specific demographic characteristics and needs of each community. One attractive approach in this regard is the use of specially selected (or newly created) community-based centers, located in poverty areas. These would serve as the locus for outreach, screening and service delivery. Their design could then emphasize an enriched supportive service complement that would seek to involve families of youth as well. In some respects these centers would function like "settlement houses," but with an intensive focus on "settling" youth in employment or employ-ability development programs.

Such an intervention requires a significant federal presence--the resource needs alone demand it--as well as other resources. Such large expenditures, moreover, may be essential in the long run to make a perceptible change for the better in those areas where there are high concentrations of poor, at-risk youth. Likewise, as with most large-scale initiatives, the time-frame necessary for results to be produced is long, and a research component capable of measuring those results with some precision is an essential element.

The political obstacles are considerable. Yet strategically, this approach has the clear advantage of focusing resources where they are most needed, and--if well used--most likely to have a major impact on the aggregate problems of at-risk youth. This approach also lets us bring all of what we know creatively to bear, at an

appropriate scale, on youth needs where they are likeliest to be most acute.

5. Community Service

The concept of community service offers intriguing possibilities for providing many at-risk youngsters with the means to attain personal growth, assume constructive roles, make tangible contributions to their communities, and develop the discipline and maturity they will need as workers and members of society.

In a typical program, youth might fulfill a requirement to work a set number of hours at tasks that have clear value in their communities: clearing lots, maintaining parks, and helping in nursing homes, libraries and community centers. A number of schools across the nation now have such a requirement, and the concept is reflected clearly in many of the state-operated (and city-based) youth service corps that have been started over the past decade.

This approach remains controversial. A broad-based national initiative would be non-targeted, and in its design would need to provide opportunities to all young people, not just those at risk. Yet this seeming contradiction can prove a benefit, for it provides a "mainstream" opportunity for disadvantaged youth to contribute and develop, without the stigma associated with much second-chance programming.

A more serious objection may be lodged against school-based service programs in that they will fail to reach school dropouts, the group at greatest risk of employment problems. But if such school-based programs can succeed in keeping more youth in school, they may nonetheless make an important strategic contribution to reducing the number of dropouts that other programs serve.

A community service initiative with two components would also meet this latter objection. In such a scheme, youth enrolling in an in-school program would be required to perform a specified number of service hours while in school. If the opportunities for such service are carefully selected for diversity and for the value of work, and if the program is administered with care and rigor, it can furnish many at-risk youngsters with chances to work productively within the framework of schooling, side by side with their more advantaged peers, gaining both work knowledge and a sense of accomplishment and self-worth.

The second component would be a more intensive program regimen, available to school-leavers and to the youth who choose to defer service until they have completed school. It would be broadly modeled on current youth service corps programs, particularly the urban non-residential programs (New York's City Volunteer Corps and the San Francisco Conservation Corps). In particular it would

stress hard work, high expectations, and the value of the work accomplished for the local communities.

This latter component would need to balance the rigorous requirements of such programs with supportive services (including remedial education) necessary to afford dropouts the chance to complete the program successfully, and perhaps finish their schooling requirements as well.

A national experiment, scrupulously researched, is an essential first step in such an undertaking. Our current knowledge of such programs argues strongly that such an initiative will have to make careful and difficult choices regarding the kinds of benefits to be sought and how they are to be attained. It may be possible, for example, to design a program that provides stronger incentives and support for at-risk youth (through scholarship funds or needs-based stipends), even as service requirements are designed to be "universal."

The experiment might focus on a cluster of similar approaches with variations that provide useful guidance about workable alternatives. Issues of cost, administration and political feasibility are basic concerns, and a demonstration phase will have to provide clear and convincing evidence of national feasibility.

This approach clearly cannot serve all at-risk youth. Yet its potential to serve many of them, and to provide opportunities for growth and development to youth generally, make national youth service an appealing focus, and one that deserves serious consideration as an investment in our youth in the coming decade.

From all these initiatives, we can expect no single all-encompassing solution to be found. The complexity and magnitude of problems faced by at-risk youth surely mean we must continue the search for better understanding, and better practice, if we are to increase our capacity to respond to these problems.

This paper has argued that the search should move from an established base of knowledge to an ambitious agenda of research and action. Neither government, with its natural rigidities and partisan swings of temperament, nor the private sector, nor the foundation community--limited in the magnitude of its resources--can pursue the search alone.

The proper exhortation must be to all the sectors to work together fruitfully and effectively, as they have at times in the past. An agenda such as that proposed above--modified, expanded, and adjusted--can be accomplished successfully and can add much to our capacity to provide second chances to youth who need them. We hope the Grant Commission's work prompts the interest, the commitment and the efforts that improve the chances for the youth of today and tomorrow.

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APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTIONS OF ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAMS

CITIES IN SCHOOLS

Cities in Schools is a national organization that assists local communities to coordinate their public service agencies to better serve at-risk youth in the schools. Cities in Schools does not present one set program model, but rather helps communities design their own individual programs.

The programs are run under the aegis of the local school system and the mayor's office and may serve students at the elementary, junior high, or high school level depending on the site. The two program components common to almost all sites are the provision of basic skills and social support services in the school setting. The mixture of public service agency personnel cooperating in this task varies, but usually includes a teacher, a counselor, and some mix of representatives from the following agencies: the Department of Health, Parks and Recreation, the Juvenile Justice System, the Welfare Department, and the Private Industry Council.
Students may enter the program voluntarily or through referral by the Juvenile Court System or a teacher, and they usually remain in the program throughout the school year.

SUMMER TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Summer Training and Education Program is a national demonstration-research project aimed at preventing at-risk youth from leaving school. Fourteen and fifteen-year-olds who are poor and performing poorly in school are targeted for the two-summer program, operated in five sites nationally, which seeks to address two major causes of early school leaving: academic failure and teen parenting.

In each summer, participants hold a half-time job; the other half-day is spent in basic skills remediation (90 hours) and a specialized life skills curriculum that encourages youth to make responsible choices regarding sexual activity. During the school year between program summers, youngsters are contacted regularly, participate in group activities, and are referred for extra services they may need.

The program is being extensively researched. Participants are tested before and after each summer, and survey data provides information about their knowledge and attitudes regarding sexual activity. Long-term follow-up data will provide information about school retention, graduation, early labor market experience and reductions in child-bearing.

PHILADELPHIA HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIES

Founded in 1969, the Philadelphia High School Academies program is a school/business collaboration designed to encourage students who are at high risk of dropping out of high school to achieve graduation and improve their employability on the way to that goal.

Students identified by poor attendance records, teacher and counselor recommendations, and other similar means, attend one of four academy models (Automotive and Mechanical Sciences, Business, Electrical, or Health) which operate as "schools within schools" in 10 of the city's public high schools. They attend separate classes from the rest of the high school, classes which integrate traditional academic skills with the academy's general topic area, i.e. using automotive examples in math classes, using health/medical terms in Spanish classes.

During their junior year, students are evaluated for "job readiness" and, with local business cooperation, are interviewed in order to obtain part-time, after-school jobs. Businesses also provide part-time and full-time entry level positions for graduates.

Other business involvement includes participation on an advisory board, curriculum review, and occasional classroom presentations.

70001 LTD

The 70001 program places disadvantaged young people between the ages of 16 and 21 in unsubsidized employment. There are 61 programs operating nationwide in some 23 states. The national office, located in Washington, D.C., oversees local efforts and provides them with technical assistance in staff development and program implementation.

The programs principally serve high school dropouts; a few, however, target youth who still in school who are at risk of dropping out. 70001 participants receive pre-employment training, unsubsidized job placement (in the case of the in-school program, it is part-time work), and life-long membership in the 70001 Career Association (SEVCA). The latter is designed to foster peer support and help participants develop socialization skills. SEVCA sponsors a range of group social activities, field trips, and community service projects. Those without high school diplomas are provided with educational services, including GED instruction.

CALIFORNIA REGIONAL OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS

The California Regional Occupational Centers and Regional Occupational Programs (ROC/Ps) operate throughout the state as part of the public education system. They were formed in 1968 to "provide high quality vocational and technical job training opportunities to a larger number of the population than can be provided adequately, efficiently, and economically by a single school or district." They serve youth who are 16 and older, and a small percentage of adults. Though the programs are untargeted, one-third of the students served are disadvantaged.

Students generally take ROC/P courses to supplement their high school curricula, since only a limited number of courses are accepted as credit towards graduation. The courses may be taught in the schools or a workplace and include such topics as Computer Programming, Commercial Photography and Licensed Vocational Nursing. Students spend varying amounts of time in the program depending on the occupation they choose to pursue.

Funding for instruction, administration and supplies for the 68 different programs and centers is provided by the state. The business sector contributes equipment, work-study opportunities, and technical advice and serves as an important source of instructors.

THE JOB CORPS

The Job Corps is an intensive residential employment and education program that serves disadvantaged high school youth. The program aims to prepare youth for employment first by removing them from environments that may contribute to the social and employment barriers they are experiencing. Second, the program offers combined basic skills training, supportive services, labor market preparation and occupational training to participants.

The Job Corps is a federally funded and administered program, operating through a network of residential centers that contract to provide the appropriate training and education services to roughly 63,000 youngsters annually. A particularly noteworthy feature of the program is its success in dealing with severely disadvantaged segments of the at-risk youth population--particularly adjudicated youth and poor academic performers. The program's effects have been established through extensive longitudinal and documentation research that has followed program youth for up to five years.

JOBSTART

JOBSTART is a national demonstration-research project designed to provide occupational training, support services and basic skills to disadvantaged school dropouts aged 17-21. The project has started in 16 sites nationally, and will serve 1,500 - 1,600 youth in each of two cohorts, for a total of more than 3,000 participants.

The programs operated in each locality vary somewhat in terms of service providers and the exact content of the service components. However, minimum standards for two key components have been established: at least 200 hours of basic skills remediation and at least 500 hours of skills training are to be provided for each participant.

Documentation analysis and an experimental research design (using randomly assigned controls) will determine the long-term impacts of the program on employment, earnings, welfare dependency, child-bearing patterns, educational achievements and criminal activity.

YOUTH SERVICE CORPS

Youth Service Corps offer work experience and labor market preparation to young adults, generally between the ages of 16 and 21. Working in crews of eight to ten, they perform work that benefits the community -- conservation of natural resources, emergency and disaster relief, and, in a few examples, human services. Programs may operate state-wide, under the auspices of a state agency or locally, usually under the auspices of a local non-profit agency.

Typically, the length of stay in a youth service program runs between six and 12 months. Participants receive basic instruction in appropriate work attitudes and behavior. Those involved in conservation projects usually also receive some environmental education as well. Some corps offer educational services as part of the program; and many encourage participants to complete their studies either through program-sponsored or other educational programs.

THE COMPREHENSIVE COMPETENCIES PROGRAM (CCP)

The Comprehensive Competencies Program (CCP) is an individualized, competency-based educational delivery system developed by the Remediation and Training Institute (RTI) in 1983 and now in use in community-based organizations, schools, correction facilities and job training programs across the country.

The CCP integrates numerous educational approaches and materials into a learning system covering academic competencies as well as functional competencies determined necessary for success in the family, society and the economy. Both youth and adults are served by the program.

CCP Learning Centers established with this system are equipped with a variety of print and audio-visual material spanning an array of subjects and ability levels and are usually supplemented by a mix of computer-assisted instructional courseware. Continuing support and services are provided by RTI to assure effective use and continuing improvement.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE VENTURES. Established in 1977, P/PV is a non-profit corporation dedicated to "finding ways that the public and private sectors can help our nation's disadvantaged citizens, especially its youth, become productively employed and self-sufficient." P/PV evaluates existing employment and training programs, conducts multi-site national demonstrations to test proposed solutions, designs new strategies, and assists the public and private sectors to replicate initiatives proved effective.

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GARY C. WALKER is Executive Vice President of P/PV. After earning an LL.B. at Yale in 1969, Mr. Walker practiced law and worked in several leadership positions in the Vera Institute of Justice. From 1974-83 he earned a national reputation in the employment and training area at the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, the last five years as a senior vice president. From 1983-85, he was cofounder and partner with William Grinker of Grinker, Walker and Associates, a consulting firm specializing in human resources policy analysis and development.

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A COMMENTARY

on Public/Private Venture's
(authors: Thomas J. Smith, Gary Walker and Rachel A. Baker)

YOUTH AND THE WORKPLACE: SECOND-CHANCE PROGRAMS AND THE HARD-TO-EMPLOY

by **Gary Burtless**

This paper sets out to address a large number of questions bearing upon youth employment policy. In view of the number and complexity of the questions raised, readers would be astonished if all questions were dealt with thoroughly. Indeed, as I shall argue below, several questions are dealt with imprecisely or incompletely.

In the first section of their report the authors describe the economic and demographic context of youth employment problems and describe the groups that will face the most severe adjustment problems in the future. This portion seems to me well-reasoned and consistent with most of the available evidence. The authors note, for example, that future youth cohorts are smaller than ones of the 1970s and early 1980s, but point out that the relative size of a cohort provides no guarantee of its employment prospects. The large cohort that entered the labor force in the 1970s had fewer problems finding work than many had feared because of the surprising capacity of the U.S. economy to generate new jobs. The authors seem to conclude from this that the smaller size of the youth cohorts of the future provides no assurance that youth unemployment will decline anytime soon. They could add, however, that the cohorts entering in the 1970s and early 1980s experienced sizable losses in real wages relative to older workers and relative to young workers who entered employment in the 1960s. The smaller number of young people entering work in the future could conceivably enjoy substantial wage gains. Even if their unemployment experience is no better than that of entering cohorts of the recent past, their earnings experience could be significantly better.

The advantage to be gained from the small size of future youth cohorts may be offset by the changing composition of these cohorts, as noted in the report. The total number of entering youth will decline, but the fraction of youth who are black and Hispanic will rise. Since these groups have traditionally experienced the worst problems getting started in the job market, the nation's youth employment problem may continue to be severe.

The report is pessimistic about the future demand for labor but, I believe, for the wrong reasons. The work of Bluestone and Harrison is cited to show that the job market is becoming more stratified and that a growing number of jobs are poorly paid. Bluestone and Harrison's results were obtained by careful selection of starting and end dates for measuring trends. Over long periods, the distribution of earnings in this country has remained fairly stable, except for the decline in relative wages received by younger male workers that occurred with the influx of the huge baby boom cohort. Among older workers there has actually been some decline in the incidence of low paying jobs.* With smaller youth cohorts in the future, it is plausible to believe that either the job prospects or the earnings prospects (or both) of young workers will improve.

The recent surge of involuntary part-time employment, cited in the paper is primarily a cyclical phenomenon associated with high general unemployment in the 1980s. Most of the rise in part-time employment in the United States has been due to the changing composition of the work force (it contains more women and working students) and changing preferences. The main source of concern about the future should be the secular trend toward higher unemployment in recessions and higher general levels of unemployment during cyclical recoveries. All of the evidence accumulated since 1960 suggests that high rates of unemployment have

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* See Robert Z. Lawrence, "Sectoral Shifts and the Size of the Middle Class," The Brookings Review, Fall 1984, pp. 3-11.

worse effects on troubled youths (and the disadvantaged more generally) than on other segments of the work force.

The authors then consider the state of current youth employment policy. They are skeptical of the direction of youth training under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). After describing the differences between JTPA and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), the authors assert that the new policies work "against any serious commitment to second-chance youth programming." The basis for this claim is that by reducing outlays on support services and work experience and by establishing placement rate goals and a budgetary ceiling on spending per enrollee, the Department of Labor has ruled out programs that could most effectively aid disadvantaged youth. While I sympathize with the authors' biases, I cannot find any evidence in their report that an alternative set of policies would work any better than the ones established under JTPA.

The reduction in supportive services for JTPA enrollees is criticized. The authors argue later on that the rationale for supportive services is "unquestioned," but they also concede that little is known about their actual value in successful youth employment programs. While I would not claim that the level of spending on support services is irrelevant to program effectiveness, it seems unreasonable to criticize the Department of Labor for curtailing spending given the current state of knowledge. Perhaps Labor Department officials feel that training per se is the most effective "support service." Given a limited budget, they would prefer to devote most of their resources to training as opposed to less effective services. The authors provide no arguments to suggest that this view is incorrect.

The authors implicitly criticize the cutback in work experience programs. Yet they offer no evidence that these programs were effective in comparison with other employability development programs. The Department can cite (weak)

evidence that work experience is less effective than alternative strategies.

The authors decry the ceiling on spending per enrollee. They fail to provide evidence that serving fewer people would do greater good for the disadvantaged. (If Congress and the President appropriate $1 billion for the programs, then raising the ceiling on spending per enrollee necessarily reduces the number of youth who can be served. The authors may dislike the $1 billion spending total, but that is another issue. Can they demonstrate that spending more money per person, but on fewer people, would actually be beneficial to disadvantaged youth? If they can, this would be a good argument against the Labor Department's current policy.)

The authors are especially harsh in criticizing the Department for establishing placement goals in youth programs. As noted, this policy puts pressure on providers to enroll the most employable among the eligible population. But it also puts pressure on providers to do the best they possibly can to place those disadvantaged youths whom they do enroll. Can the authors suggest an alternative incentive mechanism that would work to improve the performance of providers? Can the authors demonstrate that serving the most disadvantaged among the eligible population would raise the net effectiveness of youth programs? Since they do neither of these things in their paper, they have only weak grounds for criticizing present Department of Labor policy. I am not arguing that the current policy is the right one, only that the authors fail to establish that there is a better one.

When the authors turn to our present state of knowledge, I find little to quarrel with. We do not know much about whether current programs work or whether new ones offer promise. The interested reader is referred to the National Academy of Science's Youth Employment and Training Programs: The YEDPA Years, which offers a judicious (and depressing) survey of the lessons of past research. Money was appropriated by the Congress in the late 1970s, ostensibly to extend

our knowledge of existing and experimental programs to help disadvantaged youth. Most of this money was spent on programs that may or may not have been successful--we shall never know. With a handful of exceptions, most of the tested programs were not evaluated with enough care to yield definite conclusions.*

The authors offer some tentative suggestions about program design based on "the state of practice." These suggestions are not especially helpful for two reasons. First, they are vague, and thus provide no clear guidance for either design or practice. Second, they are not supported by precise evidence. People without first-hand knowledge of youth programs are essentially asked to place their trust in the authors' good judgement and intuition. The problem with this is that people have been asked to do the same thing for the last two decades. The employment problems of disadvantaged youth have gotten worse over those two decades. Perhaps the public's dwindling faith is reflected in dwindling appropriations for youth employment programs in particular and manpower programs more generally.

The authors next provide a survey of new policy directions in the 1980s. They mention four new trends in policy-making: the education reform movement; "state-level initiatives" (apparently a new level of policy-making, rather than a new policy per se); initiatives on teenage pregnancy; and unspecified intervention strategies in the middle school. The authors do not take a strong stand on any of these trends, nor should they, given the current state of our knowledge.

Staff Note: * However, see Richard F. Elmore, "The Uses (and Abuses) of Social Science Research in Employment and Training Programs," prepared by **Youth and America's Future**.

In their conclusion, the authors suggest promising avenues fornew knowledge-development efforts. They offer two general suggestions and five specific proposals for additional evaluation. Their first general suggestion is that evaluators develop "a more coherent set of methods for short-term program reasonably well trained program evaluators already have the tools to measure a program's effectiveness. The only reliable way to develop short-term measures of effectiveness is to conduct long-term data collection that would help to establish which short-run indicators provide good evidence of long-run results. A problem with calling for better short-term studies is that we cannot speed up the passage of time. If we want to know whether a program delivers permanent or only temporary help to a disadvantaged youth, we have no alternative but to await the collection of information one, two, or three years after the participant's graduation. The authors' second suggestion is that evaluations include ethnographic analysis. I agree that this would be helpful. *

The proposals for research at the conclusion of the paper are highly varied. Most of them are too vague to provide a clear guide to action. The authors advocate making second-chance programs more "holistic," "enriching many of our existing programs," and using the literature from counseling, education, social work, and psychology for materials and ideas. They suggest a five-plank plan to reduce dropout rates, including a public commitment from school superintendents to strengthen schools for "all youngsters" (emphasis in original) and the development of "re-entry" strategies for kids who have already dropped out. They advocate middle school interventions that focus upon providing "social, medical, psychological, educational" services to troubled youth: "The extensive basic

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* Paul Osterman, in "The Politics and Economics of CETA Programs," Journal of the American Planning Association, October 1981, provides an excellent and very helpful ethnographic study of CETA youth programs in Boston. If this kind of study were replicated in every evaluation of existing or proposed manpower programs, our state of knowledge would be vastly improved.

research literature that speaks to these questions must be rigorously explored, and in many case expanded upon." The report, unfortunately, does not describe the specific services that would be delivered to middle-school students, nor does it inform the reader of the findings of the "extensive basic research literature" in this area. (I suspect that the literature on this topic is about as in conclusive as the literature on effective training and remediation strategies for older youths.) They argue for allocating resources "more effectively" and for coordinating the services of the education, training, public welfare, and criminal justice systems. Finally, they advocate testing the idea of community service for youth both inside and outside of schools. This idea is not spelled out in any detail. Would participants receive a stipend? If not, how could working drop-outs afford to participate? Why would unemployed dropouts want to participate?

It is difficult for me to see how this report provides a clear strategy, either for youth employment policy in general or knowledge development in particular. My own preference is for a far simpler and more humble plan of action. We should forthrightly acknowledge our ignorance of "what works." We should begin a systematic examination of the effectiveness of existing training/remediation strategies using controlled random trials. We should test, on a modest scale, those new remediation strategies that have a plausible chance of success. This, too, should be done with controlled random trials and careful, long-term follow-up. We should be modest in our claims and realistic in our expectations about the potential success of any single strategy. We should be prepared to jettison program models that do not (1) improve school performance or completion rates; (2) raise eventual unsubsidized earnings; or (3) reduce criminal activity. (I am deeply skeptical of less tangible indicators of program

success.) Finally, we should be prepared to devote a large fraction of current youth employment appropriations to this effort.*

I realize that my plan will be criticized as a self-serving Full-Employment Act for Statisticians and Data Gatherers. It is motivated, however, by my belief that we do not know whether current programs help or whether some alternative programs would work even better. The conclusions in this paper strongly support my belief. The authors acknowledge that we have not learned much, and when discussing policies for the future the most they can say is that a few of them "appear promising."

If we really want to help troubled youth, our basic goal must be to learn what can help them. Social science theories, combined with a naive faith that "more expensive" must mean "more helpful," do not seem to me a legitimate basis for action. Moreover, I am concerned by the erosion in public and Congressional confidence that <u>any</u> public program can be helpful for the disadvantaged. If we wish to assure continued taxpayer support for second-chance programs, we will have to demonstrate that they aid their intended beneficiaries. The hopeful declaration that some of them "appear promising" does not seem sufficient.

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* With Larry L. Orr, I have offered a detailed rationale for this strategy in "Are Classical Experiments Needed for Manpower Policy?" The Journal of Human Resources, Fall 1986.

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Before coming to Brookings in 1981, he served as an economist in the Policy and Evaluation offices of the Secretaries of Labor and Health, Education, and Welfare. His responsibilities in those offices included manpower and training projects and the two largest of the negative-income-tax (or NIT) experiments.

A COMMENTARY

on **Public/Private Venture's**
(authors: Thomas J. Smith, Gary Walker and Rachel A. Baker)

YOUTH AND THE WORKPLACE:
SECOND-CHANCE PROGRAMS AND THE HARD-TO-EMPLOY

by **Jacqueline P. Danzberger**

The writers summarize the issues faced in serving hard-to-employ youth and what has been learned about second-chance programs from research and demonstrations during the past decade. This review is posed against an analysis of national demographic and economic trends likely to exacerbate the challenges already faced by at-risk youth. The paper presents some well-considered thoughts about possible directions for programmatic research and experimentation with relevance to policymakers, program developers, practitioners and others working to improve the efficacy and availability of services for hard-to-employ youth.

The paper's suggestion to move to more qualitative and possibly ethnographic research is particularly important if we are to advance beyond the historical research focus which has concentrated mainly on the measurement of short-term quantitative program outcomes. Descriptive program and process evaluation has been minimal, has lacked cross-cutting evaluative structures and has been, in the main, idiosyncratic to the various demonstrations. The substance of the suggested "next generation" of knowledge development (human development, dropout prevention, community or national service, coordination and direction of resources) builds logically from the current knowledge base about second-chance programs.

This commentary is not a critique of the paper's substance. Its purpose instead, is to shift the focus to the political, structural and organizational behavior issues which underlie second-chance programs and which, if not recognized and addressed, will to continue to limit their growth and development.

The authors state that their hope is "...to catalyze and expand the search for new thinking, programs and understanding." The premise of P/PV's suggestions for the future is that we should continue to improve the scope and variety of second-chance programs and the mix of program components, improve integration of resources and services among agencies, institutions and organizations, and gain greater understanding about at-risk and hard-to-employ youth (effective incentives, motivation, etc.). The unstated assumption appears to be that this approach will not only create greatly increased availability and access to appropriate programs for greater numbers of at-risk youth, but will also generate additional research evidence in support of more comprehensive second-chance programming.

While there is no doubt that policymakers, researchers and practitioners will (and should) continue to pursue greatly expanded understanding about programs "that work," I would question whether programmatic questions (new initiatives, improved programs, manipulating program variables, etc.) are the priority questions to be addressed at this juncture. Even if we had more definitive answers about what works, for whom, would there be a rush to implementation? Would the second-chance programs increase to accommodate the majority of youth at-risk and those who have already failed in the traditional first-chance system? Would public and private resources be invested at the levels necessary? Would issues of turf, control, and power disappear among the institutions, agencies and organizations necessary for comprehensive services and effective intervention strategies? Could we staff improved program designs and greater program capacity with professionals skilled in managing and implementing such programs, and in addressing the complex needs of these youth? Would the precariousness of the second-chance "system" (really a non-system) lacking a mainstream institutional base be overcome? Would the success of hard-to-employ youth in new program configurations overcome the broad-based public perceptions

of these youth as "losers" and also overcome the stigma attached to second-chance programs for youth who "couldn't make it" in the mainstream institution for youth namely school?

I suggest that while there is much to learn to improve programs and much to learn about what is most effective, for whom among this youth population, there are non-programmatic issues to address before this knowledge will be utilized to improve and expand services. These non-programmatic issues need clearer definition. They need to be moved up front on a research and experimentation agenda, placed squarely on the table for discussion by policymakers across sectors and at all levels, and included as major points in an ongoing study of how best to respond to the needs of hard-to-employ youth.

Why Don't We Act on What We Know?

Researchers and policymakers can legitimately say that we do not have a sufficient research-based body of knowledge about second-chance programs on which to base major policy and program initiatives with entire confidence. But is this what's really holding up the action? Data from social science research seem to drive action on social policy issues only when there exists common agreements that the issue is important enough to warrant broad concern and ownership, when essential leadership is committed to the issue, and when there is the sense that action for change will not be politically isolating. Social science information translates into action only if people know how to use it and perceive greater gain than loss from acting on the information. Information results in action among the often disparate but interested parties only when there is a commonly-defined goal and the perceived needs of all parties can be accomodated.

In the case of hard-to-employ youth these criteria have quite clearly not been met. The substantial knowledge (however imperfect), we do have from research in youth employment, education and behavioral sciences, program

demonstrations, common sense and experiences of hundreds of local second-chance programs has not propelled concerted action -- policymaking or programmatic -- in second-chance programs for any but a small percentage of the youth in need.

There are many issues imbedded in the question of why we don't move forward to act substantially on what is known. In the long term, these issues, while much more difficult to study and act upon, will determine whether a stable and adequate (in terms of serving the numbers in need) second-chance system develops in this country. Among these issues are: the leadership climate and nature of leadership at the community, state and national levels; perceived threats to control of resources and power of agencies, organizations and institutions; lack of accountability for any mainstream institutional framework to serve youth once they are no longer in school; the necessity for collaborative behaviors and integration of resources among agencies and organizations responsible for the pieces necessary to meet the full spectrum of needs of these youth; lack of stability in funding for second-chance programs; increase in issue area experts' control of priorities, the research agenda, and channels of resources supporting initiatives; the focus on organizational survival during the 1980's for many community-based organizations which have historically been the initiators and deliverers of services to hard-to-serve and hard-to-employ youth; and the absence of organized professional knowledge and training programs for staff in second-chance programs. The majority of these issues are directly related to Richard Elmore's pivotal "how to do it?" question in his paper for the Commission. As he so aptly describes, most of the past and current research agenda concentrates on the "what works?" question.

Social science research can rarely, if ever, demonstrate major impact on the policymaking world, nor can it affect program development in any rational direction, <u>unless</u> decisionmakers want to move in that direction or are prompted to do so by political movement from key interests or from the grassroots. This

is not to suggest that social science research cannot contribute to reform. Rather, I am suggesting that the objectives of quantitative program research and pressures on social science evaluation researchers (who basically look for statistically significant outcomes) cannot produce answers from output questions which will significantly move this nation's response to hard-to-serve youth until and unless a far more basic research question is addressed, namely, how do we develop, sustain and implement a framework for stable, well-funded and ongoing services that produce positive results for youth in need of a second-chance? And in order to answer this question, we must begin to grapple with the non-programmatic, underlying political, structural and organizational issues discussed above.

Second-chance programs generally operate outside of a consistent, mainstream institutional framework, although they are often peripherally attached to mainstream institutions, usually as a carrot providing new or different resources. This largely "unanchored" focus produces many variables that weigh far more heavily on client outcomes than do the variables among program components -- assuming a program design that addresses personal, social, educational and employability needs. Further, the clients themselves and at-risk, hard-to-serve youth, are a volatile variable. Fine tuning the mix of program components is less fundamental to positive outcomes for youth than are the institutional or organizational base, nature of program staff, program stability and a community climate in which key players are committed to meeting the needs of these youth. Hard evidence exists in the documentation of the experience with the Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA) to substantiate these as issues that need better definition, study, research and resolution.

While it is true that the <u>quantifiable</u> program research from the YEDPA years is not overwhelming in and of itself, we have learned a great deal, much of which is in the direct institutional employment and training stream, the major

source of possible public funding for second-chance programs and the closest thing we have to a system to serve the hard-to-employ. Hopes that this research knowledge would translate into increased action were dashed when the JTPA legislation, as well as local policy decisions, responded to the political demand for quick results, stringent accountability for use of resources against job placement, and the push for a governance structure dominated by the private sector (despite its limited experience with youth employment initiatives or research.) Consequently, the employment and training system has moved away from emphasis on hard-to-serve youth and we are once again diverted from moving forward on the knowledge acquired through the YEDPA experiments.

Can There Be A Second-Chance System? Some Questions for New Thinking

When we talk about a second-chance system in this nation, the word "system" is used for the convenience of discussion, to provide some semblance of rhetorical order to a multitude of disconnected, unstable, underfunded, disparate programs all lacking an institutional base. After reading the P/PV paper, the reader will understand that there is no real system and no institutional focus or policy framework within which a coherent system of second-chance programs can develop. The "first-chance" system -- public elementary and secondary education -- at least has a state and local institutional framework (however faulty), institutions for training the professional cadre expected to function in these institutions, a resource stream that, if inadequate, is relatively stable, a common governance structure across the states, and a locus of jurisdiction and responsibility in state constitutions and law. Even with all these components of a true system in place, we are experiencing extreme difficulty in meeting our expectations for national outcomes in educating our students. How much greater are the difficulties facing second-chance programs comprising, as they do, a non-system at best?

The P/PV authors express belief that there is a revival of concern and interest in second-chance programming, they make their thoughtful suggestions for research and experimentation in what they take to be a context of increasing intrest in improving programs and expanding access for hard-to-employ youth. Their recommendations, if successful, could result in a genuine second-chance system.

Certainly, at least in the national rhetoric, there is renewed concern about at-risk children and youth. However, I submit that this concern is focusing mainly on the issues of high school completion and greater accountability and responsibility on the part of the first-chance system in dealing with at-risk youth. Much of the focus is on preventing school leaving, on the schools as referral centers for youth who do drop out, and as providers of alternative educational and employability services.

Given the fact that there already exists an institutional structure, i.e. the schools, supported by public resources to which policy reform and increased resources can be addressed, can we reasonably expect a concentrated and massive infusion of resources to both maintain and strengthen the first-chance system and, simultaneously to develop a second-chance system? If the answer is "no," can we really have any coherent response to the needs of hard-to-employ youth without a comprehensive and integrated policy framework?

Perhaps it is possible, given the fact that youth may be in public high school until age 21 to complete high school, that the existing, tax-supported first-chance system is the logical and fiscally practical answer to the need for a mainstream institutional base supported at the grassroots for 16-21 year-old youth requiring alternative and intensive educational social and employment services. The authors and other researchers have documented well that the closest thing to an institutional "home" second-chance programs have had -- the employment and training system -- is not serving truly at-risk younger nor older,

hard-to-employ youth. In addition, despite the present numbers of these youth and the demographic projections for their increased number, funding in this system is inadequate, regulations are inimicable to effectiveness and local decisions have had a negative effect on service to genuinely at-risk youth. It is extremely problematic whether the employment and training system, coupled with necessarily limited (if large, by usual standards) philanthropically-funded demonstrations, will really be able to develop the programs and the political commitment necessary to serve even a majority, let alone the total population of this youth cohort.

And, finally, I suggest these questions for consideration: should we focus vastly increased resources, political and intellectual energy, at this point, on second-chance programs without first addressing this nation's major need -- a coherent national youth policy? Without such a policy, can second-chance programs ever gain the base of political support, stable funding, cross-sector and cross-agency/institution/organization collaboration and operational stability necessary not merely to survive, but to succeed?

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A COMMENTARY

on **Public/Private Venture's**
(authors: Thomas J. Smith, Gary Walker and Rachel A. Baker)

YOUTH AND THE WORKPLACE:
SECOND-CHANCE PROGRAMS AND THE HARD-TO-EMPLOY

by **Morton H. Sklar**

I. Overview -- Moving from Model Programs to Institutional Change

Public/Private Ventures' analysis of "second-chance (i.e., outside of the traditional school curricula) programs" does an impressive and highly accurate job of:

- documenting the fact that existing youth training efforts fall far short of the substantial level of need;
- explaining why current federal training programs, notably the Job Training Partnership Act, are failing to reach and serve the highest risk youngsters; and,
- identifying the basic elements that are necessary to design and operate programs that would more effectively meet the needs of high-risk youth.

The one critical place where the P/PV analysis falls short is in not matching these convincing findings with a set of *action-oriented recommendations on how to produce more effective youth training programs.* We are not told how federal, state and local governments can make use of the lessons from experience that we have learned from the past to overcome existing youth program deficiencies, and to provide high-risk youngsters with more meaningful employment and training opportunities. Instead, P/PV's recommendations focus on the need to develop several new demonstration projects designed to provide further insights (along with some positive working models) on how a variety of problems and issues related to high-risk youth programming might be treated.

The approach of looking to the development of additional models is probably a natural one for P/PV, since, over the years, they have produced some of the most effective and innovative demonstration projects and supporting research in the field. P/PV's decision to restrict its recommendations to the development of additional, relatively small-scale demonstrations may also have been influenced by the concern that this might well be the only approach that is feasible at this point in time from a practical and political point of view. Given the government's reluctance to become involved with new program initiatives and expenditures, proposals that call for new and broader initiatives are likely to face considerable difficulty.

The fact remains, however, that we are long past the demonstration and research phase in our current understanding of the employment-related training needs of high-risk youth. As P/PV itself in some of its prior work, as well as a number of other youth training researchers and analysts have correctly concluded, we have learned a great deal about the types of remediation and training interventions that best promote the employability of youngsters facing

the most serious barriers to finding jobs. *What is lacking at this point is not knowledge about what is needed, so much as a policy and program commitment from federal, state and local governments that would put the lessons we have learned to broader and more constructive use.* Over and above any additional demonstration projects such as P/PV recommends, we need more specific action-oriented proposals on how to translate what we have already learned about effective youth programming into concrete policies and programs designed to overcome the major training deficiencies that have been amply documented. Among the questions that need to be addressed in the process of formulating a more action-oriented approach are:

- o What kinds of broader government programs need to be developed and implemented?
- o How do we overcome the major roadblocks that have made it difficult (if not impossible) for such policies and programs to be adopted in the past?
- o What are the first steps that must be taken to make second-chance youth programming more broadly available?

These questions must begin to be explored if we are to make any headway in closing the major gap that currently exists between the high level of training needs of high-risk youth and the inadequate response of government to this issue.

Section IV of this commentary attempts to provide a few proposals that might serve as a starting-off point for a more action-oriented analysis. But before considering these proposals it is important to analyze some of the key points in the P/PV report that help to explain why more concrete action is needed and what form it needs to take in order to be responsive and effective.

II. The Underlying Thesis: We Need to Focus More of Our Youth Training Efforts on the Highest-Risk Youngsters

One of the major reasons why a greater commitment of resources has not been made to second-chance youth training programs in the past has been that policy-makers and the general public have not been made adequately aware of:

- o the extent of the unemployment problem facing high-risk youth;
- o the serious negative consequences that these problems produce for society as a whole (what the New York City group Interface has aptly called "The Cost of Doing Nothing"); and,
- o the gains to society that would result from a more serious effort aimed at meeting the employment needs of youth who are most at-risk of becoming (and remaining) chronically unemployed.

Specifically, as the P/PV report correctly concludes, we can produce major improvements in our nations's productivity and income tax base, as well as significant cost savings in welfare and criminal justice expenditures, by investing more of our training resources in youngsters who face the bleakest prospects for long-term joblessness if their employment potential is not improved. But is has not been easy to convince policy-makers of the logic of this conclusion. The practical fact is that we now allocate so few resources to youth training needs generally that the pressures are enormous to focus attention

primarily on youngsters who can be placed in jobs with the least expenditure of time and effort.

Because adequate resources have not been made available, government officials and program operators alike have been forced to restrict their vision to short-term, less costly types of interventions, and to select participants who will produce the "best results" (i.e., faster and higher rates of placement) most easily. This approach seems appealing at first glance. When there is not enough money to go around, why not concentrate on those who need the least assistance, so as to produce some effective results quickly, and to allow as many eligibles as possible to participate. But the flaw in this logic is that many of these "high success rate" participants already have most of the skill attainments they need to become employable independent of additional training or placement assistance they might receive. The actual return on society's investment in their further training is quite small when compared to what they likely would have achieved in any case without additional interventions. In terms of producing long-term change that would not have existed, expenditures of this type are of dubious value.

More careful and comprehensive analyses of the true impacts of training programs -- analyses that compare gains of participants with those of control groups who do not receive aid -- show that more significant overall gains result, both for the affected individuals and for society as a whole, when training assistance is targeted to the hardest-to-serve groups who would have the most difficult time becoming employed without significant training interventions. Research by Manpower Demonstration and Research Corporation (MDRC) and other training analysts finds that *even modest employment gains by a small proportion of the highest risk groups produce more significant welfare cost savings, and more measurable improvements in employment, income and productivity, than similar investments focused on those who are closer to being job-ready.* The two studies with the most convincing evidence along these lines are MDRC's analyses of the Supported Work Demonstration Project[1] and their recently-issued series of reports on a variety of welfare-to-work programs nationwide.[2]

The Supported Work program provided long-term, comprehensive training assistance and a full range of supportive services to a variety of economically disadvantaged groups. MDRC found that the program produced the greatest benefits for long-term (average of 9 years) welfare mothers who started out with the most substantial types of educational and job skill deficiencies, little or no experience in the workplace (outside the home), and major impediments (such as child care needs) that further restricted their employability. These welfare mothers experienced significant increases in employment and earnings above a control group of similarly-situated non-participants. Despite the extreme severity of the employment barriers that they faced, their employment and income gains also were substantially higher than those of all the other economically disadvantaged groups participating in the program.[3]

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[1] Summary of Findings of the National Supported Work Demonstration, Manpower Demonstration Research Corp., Ballinger Publications, Cambridge, MA, 1980.

[2] Findings are summarized in Gueron, Work Initiatives for Welfare Recipients, MDRC, March, 1986.

[3] Supported Work Summary Findings Report, p. 99.

MDRC's analysis of a number of demonstration welfare-to-work programs being operated by state and localities also found that the best results were achieved by programs that provided more comprehensive types of assistance, rather than focusing on shorter-term, one-dimensional activities such as job search or work experience (workfare) alone. Moreover, the most positive program impacts, notably welfare cost savings, were experienced by "the harder-to-employ subgroups of the welfare population...[who] fare less on their own, and benefit the most from program services."[4]

Research focused more directly on youth training needs has produced comparable conclusions. Prior evaluations by P/PV found that *shorter-term types of assistance provided to youth*, such as pre-employment counseling and job search, though they are among the most popular youth training approaches, *"do not [by themselves] produce long-term earnings improvements, or enhance the likelihood of employment."*[5]

While youths as a whole did not achieve long-term gains anywhere near the high levels experienced by long-term welfare mothers, there was "modest evidence that supported work works better for those [youth] who are most disadvantaged." More positive earnings and employment improvements for jobless youth tend to result only from more comprehensive and longer-term types of training initiatives that seek to deal with basic educational deficiencies as well as more immediate job placement needs. [6]

This more comprehensive approach, unfortunately, is the one that is least likely to be taken under current youth training policies which instead emphasize short-term, limited types of interventions.[7] Any positive results that these short-term training approaches might achieve are more likely to quickly evaporate over time, leaving the participants exactly where they would have been if they had not received assistance.[8]

The other major research finding that should be given considerable weight in determining whether to target resources primarily to the highest-risk youngsters or to those who need less assistance is the fact that a very high proportion of the nation's chronically unemployed youth tends to be heavily concentrated in a relatively small sub-set of young people -- school dropouts,

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[4] MDRC Work Initiatives Summary Report, p. 16.

[5] Longer-Term Impacts of Pre-Employment Services on the Employment and Earnings of Disadvantaged Youth, P/PV, May, 1983.

[6] Hahn and Lerman, What Works in Youth Employment Policy, Committeee on New American Realities, Washington, D.C., 1985, p. 11.

[7] See, e.g., Grinker, Walker and Associates, Independent Private Sector Analysis of the Job Training Partnership Act; The Operation and Impact of the JTPA Program in the State of Virginia, Virginia Association of Community Action Agencies, Richmond, VA.; and The Federal Response to Black Youth Unemployment, draft report prepared for the Joint Center for Political Studies, Washington, D.C., 1987.

[8] P/PV Longer-Term Impacts report, cited above.

minorities, and other high-risk groups.[9] One of the major reasons why youth unemployment rates have remained very high, despite improvements in the economy that have reduced overall jobless rates, no doubt relates to the fact that most existing youth training efforts do not reach this core group of chronically unemployed youngsters.

Taken together, these research findings strongly support the conclusion that the basic need of refocusing our youth employment assistance efforts more directly on the highest-risk youngsters -- those who are responsible for so large a share of chronic unemployment -- must become the starting point of any national debate on how to deal with teen joblessness. P/PV's report sets out some convincing factual and theoretical reasons why this approach is the correct one. But it does not take the next steps that are required:

- o calling in clear and unambiguous terms for improved targeting to high-risk youth as the basis for a new and stronger national youth job training policy; and,

- o providing a set of specific recommendations explaining how this approach can be translated into concrete program changes at both the federal and local levels.

We have long since passed the point where demonstrations are needed to help us identify the types of youth training efforts that are most needed and would produce the best results. What the Brandeis Center for Human Resources refers to as the "lessons from experience" that have been amassed from previous youth employment and training initiatives, while they are not perfected by any means, certainly provide very clear indicators of the types of assistance most needed, and most likely to be effective.[10] The unconscionably high rates of chronic youth unemployment that we are experiencing, and the serious negative impacts that this problem is producing for large segments of our population -- and for the nation as a whole -- means that we do not have the luxury of further, time-consuming confirmations of what has already been learned. *What is required at this point is the development of new policies and programs that build on past youth training experience, and give substance to the lessons it has produced.*

III. What Works and Does Not Work in Meeting Youth Training Needs

What are some of the principal "lessons from experience" in the youth training field that P/PV and other analysts have identified? These lessons are important not only because they show us what works effectively for youth, but because they also help explain why a large proportion of our existing training effort is not producing desirable results.

P/PV offers us a framework for effective youth programming based on what they identify as "the best efforts in current practice." This framework consists of training approaches that incorporate the following characteristics:

- o a broad, comprehensive spectrum of program elements, rather than a more limited focus on one or two types of training activities -- this is necessary so that the training can be tailored individually to each

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[9] Hahn and Lerman, What Works, pp. 18-21.

[10] Hahn and Lerman, What Works, cited above.

participant, and designed to meet a full range of needs;

- an ability to serve 14 and 15 year-olds, not just those at the higher end of the youth spectrum;

- an emphasis on longer-term, more comprehensive forms of assistance that are more likely to produce lasting effects;

- the use of a competency-based system of proven effectiveness to help design the training that is provided, and to measure and certify the skill attainments of participants;

- heavy stress on the provision of remedial education assistance in the basic academic skills to every participant who lacks a high school diploma or has literacy deficiencies; and,

- provision of adequate support services, including economic assistance, to allow participants to deal with the serious social and economic difficulties that typically accompany the problem of chronic unemployment for youth.

This "model framework" for developing an effective youth training program contains elements that have frequently been cited by youth training analysts as the ones most essential to success. But there is one other "lesson" emerging from past and existing youth training programs that is equally, if not more, important. This is the fact that, as the P/PV report takes pains to point out, in practice "few youth are served by this set of 'proven and promising' programs." *Only a very small number of jurisdictions presently offer youngsters an opportunity to participate in training programs that offer even a reasonable proportion of the elements that have been identified as essential for effective results to be achieved.*

Part of the blame for this serious deficiency rests with the fact that, as P/PV explains, the "state of knowledge and practice" regarding youth training that "may seem self-evident today" only evolved over the course of the past ten years. Consequently, it should not come as too much of a surprise that this recently acquired wisdom has not reached all decision-makers, especially at the state and local level, who are responsible for allocating youth training funds, and for designing plans and "requests for funding proposals" (RFPs) that mold the direction that programming takes.

An incomplete dissemination of available knowledge about effective youth training is, unfortunately, only part of the reason that current programming is missing the mark so badly. Another major factor contributing to our poor youth training record, and one that is much harder to deal with than an information gap, is the long-standing failure of federal employment assistance policies and programs (notably those embodied in the JTPA) to provide clear and adequate direction and guidance on what needs to be done to provide successful training interventions for youth. A companion factor is the general failure of government at federal, state and local levels (with a few notable exceptions) to provide adequate funding to meet youth training needs, and to deal specifically with the special employment-related problems of high-risk youngsters.

To be more specific, our primary employment and training vehicle, JTPA, is not doing the job that it should be doing for youth. JTPA does fund two programs targeted exclusively on youth needs -- the Summer Youth Program (SYP) and the

Job Corps. It also sets aside 40% of all regular training funds (Title II-A) to be spent on youth. But the Job Corps and summer youth funds are constantly being eroded in purchasing power, and SYP usually does little more than provide temporary income support and work experience. These contributions may be temporarily useful, but they are not likely to have any lasting impact on participants' long-term employment potential. It was only this past summer that Congress authorized the use of a portion of SYP funds for remedial education purposes, in an effort to upgrade the program's impact. Even then, the remedial education component was recommended rather than made mandatory.

But it is the failure of the more substantial portion of JTPA (the regular Title II-A training activities) to serve youth effectively that deserves special criticism. A number of independent analyses of JTPA share the common findings that:

- the level of resources made available for youth training has been woefully inadequate to meet the high level of need -- only 3 to 5% of eligibles can be served given JTPA's existing level of funding;

- even at these inadequate funding levels, many local jurisdictions are having trouble spending the 40% of JTPA's allocation that must go to youth, largely because they do not have enough familiarity with youth training programs -- this underspending problem has been declining more recently, but is still serious in many jurisdictions because of the large backlog of unspent youth funds that has accumulated;

- too many jurisdictions are meeting their 40% youth expenditure requirement by either funding activities that lack the essential elements of effective programs, or by serving youth in adult-oriented programs -- a practice called "mainstreaming" that is severely criticized because it means youngsters are not provided specific types of assistance targeted to their specific needs; and,

- there are a number of elements in the JTPA structure itself, such as the fast-turnover and job placement orientation of its performance standards, that make it exceedingly difficult for the most seriously at-risk youngsters to participate and to be served effectively.

The evidence of these shortcomings, and their negative impact on unemployed youth is beginning to mount. P/PV cites the Grinker, Walker study as its evidence of the seriousness of JTPA's failures with regard to youth. They note especially the documented reluctance on the part of those administering JTPA at the local level -- the private industry councils (PICs) -- to devote adequate attention to training specifically targeted to the needs of youth in general, and high-risk youth in particular. Particular weight is given to the Grinker, Walker findings that a large part of the 40% youth allocation is going to older (19 through 21 year-old) youngsters in adult-oriented programs, and that under 6% of JTPA resources are being allocated to special programs designed to meet the needs of dropouts and other high-risk groups.

Two of my recent studies of JTPA document similar conclusions. My analysis of the operation of JTPA statewide in Virginia concluded that, "Far too little is

being done to meet the job training needs of at-risk and dropout youth."[11] The Virginia study found a consistent pattern of:

- o underspending on youth programs -- only 6 of Virginia's 14 service delivery areas met their 40% youth expenditure requirement (as of July 1, 1985); and,

- o only 2 of 14 SDAs had developed programs designed and targeted to meet youth needs which contained a reasonable proportion of the elements that are generally recognized as necessary for effectively serving youngsters.[12]

Even more recently, my report on the impact of JTPA on Black youth unemployment, prepared for the Joint Center for Political Studies in Washington, D.C., found that high-risk youngsters who need:

> "more substantial training interventions are either ignored, or receive the type of short-term assistance that does very little to alter their prospects for employment over the long run."[13]

Black and other minority youth bear a large part of the burden of this deficiency because:

> "they tend to make up so large a proportion of the highest-risk groups -- school dropouts, criminal justice offenders, and those with substantial academic skill deficiencies -- who receive the poorest service under JTPA. They are most in need of the more specifically youth oriented and concentrated forms of training assistance that JTPA seems least capable of providing."[14]

Both reports give some indication of more useful and effective directions that can be taken in youth programming by citing a few notable exceptions to the rule:

- o In Virginia, a few youth programming efforts in Richmond and Roanoke that match very closely major portions of the "model framework" for effective training postulated in the P/PV report;

- o In New York City, similar initiatives following the P/PV model that were organized by a coalition of youth groups, and funded by the city government outside of the JTPA context; and,

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[11] The Operation and Impact of the Job Training Partnership Act in the State of Virginia, prepared by Morton Sklar for the Virginia Association of Community Action Agencies, June, 1986, p. 11.

[12] Id. at 55-63.

[13] The Federal Response to Black Youth Unemployment: An Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Job Training Partnership Act in Four Metropolitan Areas, prepared by Morton Sklar for the Joint Center for Political Studies, Washington, D.C., March, 1987.

[14] Id. at 3-4.

- o In Chicago, a substantial effort to assist at-risk youngsters through a comprehensive system of academic remediation.

These exceptions are important because they demonstrate that the P/PV youth training model can be implemented, and can even (in very rare exceptions) be funded under JTPA, as is the case in Chicago, Richmond and Roanoke, where there is a community-wide effort to break out of the conventional JTPA mold to seek a more effective training approach. These reports also suggest that, unfortunately, these examples will remain the very rare exception unless there are basic changes made in the way that the JTPA program (or federal assistance efforts more generally) is design and operated.

IV. Designing A More Appropriate and Effective Federal Response

Recognizing the growing evidence that JTPA has not been an effective vehicle for youth training, and has largely overlooked the high-risk groups that make up the core of chronically jobless youngsters (and later adults), what can be done to reverse this wasteful trend? Essentially, the choices are to:

- o attempt to revise and upgrade the JTPA system;
- o design a new federal assistance program targeted exclusively to meet the specialized needs of youth; and/or,
- o adopt some combination of these approaches.

I would strongly recommend the combination approach, although in theory a fresh start with a specialized youth program would be the best course. Until a comprehensive and separate youth training program becomes more of a political reality, it makes sense to seek improvements in the existing JTPA structure, while laying the foundation for a new youth initiative in smaller scale. The last page of this report sets out an outline for a proposed Youth Employment and Training Act that would accomplish these dual purposes through a combination of federally-funded demonstration programs and incentive payments to service delivery areas that adopt and implement similar "model" youth programs under JTPA. It would incorporate the following concepts:

A. Improvement of JTPA

Incentive payments would be provided to SDAs that succeeded in improving the targeting of JTPA funds to high-risk youth, including:

- o dropouts and those with the highest potential for dropping out;
- o those with a history of academic failure or demonstrating literacy deficiencies; and,
- o teen parents.

Additional incentives would be provided to SDAs that adopted youth training programs containing the essential elements of the "model framework" for effective programming that P/PV and other researchers have described.

Changes would also be made in some of the structural aspects of youth that presently discourage more effective youth programming. For example:

- o Youth performance standards at the federal level should be changed to encourage the provision of more comprehensive, longer-term, competency-based, remediation-centered training -- while these types of initiatives are technically possible under JTPA now through the adoption of revised youth performance standards by each PIC, few PICs have made such changes, and there is no consistency in the way the changes are designed and implemented.

- o Remedial education should be included as a basic element in every youth training program implemented at the local level -- no proposed youth training should be approved without it.

- o The 40% youth spending requirement should be more stringently defined to discourage the practice of "mainstreaming" youth in adult programs.

- o Requirements to target assistance efforts more carefully on 14 and 15 year-olds and on high-risk youngsters should be strengthened.

- o Every proposed SDA plan should be required to have a separate section on how the 40% expenditures will be allocated, to further encourage more targeted uses.

- o comparable requirements should be placed on reporting so that more specific programming information than just the total number of youth participating is available.

B. **Adoption of a New and Separate Federal Youth Training Program**

Given the considerable shortcomings in JTPA, and the difficulty that likely will be encountered in trying to overcome them, it will be important to establish at least the foundations for a new youth training initiative that incorporates the basic elements for effective targeting and treatment of the employment needs of high-risk youth. In the future, one way to obtain resources for such a program without running afoul of existing budget restraints would be to transfer JTPA's existing 40% youth funds, and the 8% state discretionary money now used to encourage better coordination of job training with the public school system, over to the new, consolidated youth program. In the interim, a set amount of funds, perhaps drawing on these sources to some extent, could be used to provide direct federal funding for demonstration programs that successfully incorporate the "model framework" that P/PV suggests, along with high-risk targeting requirements.

It is noteworthy that, with the exception of the very small and brief (2 year) Youth Employment Demonstration Program, and the very limited portions of JTPA devoted to summer youth and Job Corps activities, there has not been an identified national initiative aimed specifically at dealing with youth training needs. The development of such an initiative may be the most practical way to draw attention to the need, and for assuring that the effective training elements contained in the P/PV model will be brought to more widespread use.

C. Stimulating Additional State and Local Funding for Youth Training

One lesson that emerges from the experience of New York, Chicago and other jurisdictions that have been successful in improving their youth training efforts has been the importance of supplementing JTPA and other federal resources aimed at assisting youth with additional state and local funding. Given the inability of JTPA to reach but a very small portion of those eligible for assistance, a state or local supplement becomes a necessity if a meaningful youth training initiative is to take place. Equally important, the process of obtaining such funding has frequently acted as a catalyst for developing the type of community-wide effort and involvement that is required to mount and operate a comprehensive youth program along the lines of the P/PV model.

D. Relating Youth Job Training Needs to the Current Debate on Welfare Reform

If there is one area of government policy that is sparking widespread interest among policy-makers and the general public it is welfare reform. Regrettably, the relationship of youth unemployment and youth training needs to the welfare reform effort has not been adequately understood. A large proportion of chronically-unemployed youth (many of them already welfare recipients) become long-term welfare recipients as their joblessness continues. We can make a major dent in the welfare rolls by recognizing the value of preventive efforts to improve the employment potential of the highest-risk youth before they fall into the pattern of long-term joblessness and welfare dependency.

E. Summary

In short, what has been missing in the past has been a well-formulated national policy, accompanied by a reasonably funded program effort, that would:

- spell out a commitment to provide comprehensive employment and training assistance to jobless youth facing the highest risks of remaining chronically unemployed;
- itemize and mandate the inclusion in all youth programming efforts of the types of comprehensive assistance, notably academic remediation, that make youth training effective; and,
- provide the resources to make such assistance available to a major proportion of high-risk youth.

We can tinker with the existing JTPA program (as Congress and the U.S. Department of Labor have begun to do in minor ways with regard to the summer youth portion), in order to promote these objectives. But the way to make dramatic progress in dealing with the hard-core, high-risk groups that produce the bulk of our youth employment is to adopt a comprehensive and separate federal policy for our national agenda.

Basic Elements of a Proposed Youth Employment and Training Assistance Program

1. New Demonstration programs funded directly by the federal government

that incorporate basic elements of a "model framework" for effective youth programming -- local private industry councils, school systems, communitybased groups and service providers would be eligible to apply.

2. Incentive payments to service delivery areas that successfully incorporate "model" elements in youth programs, and do an effective job of targeting resources and training activities to high-risk groups.

3. Creation of a new Youth Training Office in the U.S. Department of Labor to supervise JTPA youth efforts and to operate the new demonstration programs.

4. Emphasis on targeting assistance to high-risk eligibles, and to 14 and 15 year-olds.

5. Mandatory inclusion of remedial education components in all youth programs.

6. Improvements in JTPA policies and procedures to improve targeting to high-risk groups, provision of academic remediation, and planning and reporting standards.

7. Additional funding from federal, state and local sources to broaden the availability of training services.

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A COMMENTARY

THE USES (AND ABUSES) OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH IN EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

Richard F. Elmore [1]

The National Research Council Study

In October 1983, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) asked the National Research Council (NRC) to assess the knowledge development activities undertaken by the Office of Youth Programs (OYP) under the Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA) between 1978 and 1981. The Committee on Youth Employment Programs, convened by the NRC and composed of fifteen scholars from the social sciences, undertook a review of the knowledge development effort. The main objectives of the review were to summarize the lessons learned from YEDPA about the effectiveness of programs addressed to youth employment and to evaluate the research strategy used by OYP in the knowledge development effort.

The Committee found only limited evidence of effectiveness for employment programs addressed to high risk youth. With the exception of one program -- Job Corps -- the Committee found that effectiveness was limited either to the period of program enrollment or to a short period immediately following enrollment. Job Corps gave evidence of significant post-program effects and positive benefit-cost differences for up to four years after enrollment. In only two instances -- Job Corps and Supported Work -- was the Committee satisfied that the evidence was

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[1] This paper draws on a longer work, "Knowledge Development Under the Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act," prepared for the Committee on Youth Employment Programs, National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences, in Charles Betsey, Robinson Hollister, Jr., and Mary Papageorgiou, eds., Youth Employment and Training Programs: The YEDPA Years (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1985), 281-347.

methodologically sound enough to permit valid conclusions on program effects and benefit-cost differences. Among the Committee's major conclusions were methodological guidance for future large-scale research and demonstration efforts, including greater use of randomized treatment-control group designs, more longitudinal outcome data, and more precisely-defined outcome measures.

The Committee took care to explain that it concluded only that the YEDPA research failed to provide adequate evidence of program effects, not that the programs themselves were necessarily ineffective. The Committee's report, however, was generally read as suggesting that more than $600 million in research and development funds spent under YEDPA over a four-year period produced little in the way of useful knowledge about how to address the problems of unemployed youth.

The Committee's findings, coupled with those of other social science advisory bodies, have already had a significant impact on research and evaluation in federally-funded employment programs. The DOL has recently contracted for a randomized field experiment, involving 30,000 participants in 20 localities, to test the effectiveness of employment training programs administered under the Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA). In addition, another randomized experiment will be conducted on 16 programs addressed explicitly to high school dropouts, funded through JTPA and a collection of private foundations.

How should non-social scientists-- policymakers, lay leaders, and concerned citizens-- respond to the Committee's review of YEDPA research and evaluation? More specifically, how should we evaluate the claim that we don't "know" much about how to address youth labor market problems, even though we have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on research and development addressed to those problems?

The Domain of Social Science

In addressing these questions, let me first specify as clearly as possible my agreements and disagreements with the Committee. First, the Committee, as a group of social scientists asked for their expert advice, acted responsibly in saying that, by conventional canons of social research, the YEDPA evidence did not support conclusions about the effectiveness of programs addressed to the youth employment problem, with the exception Job Corps. So I do not disagree with their professional assessment of the evidence in the terms under which they conducted the assessment.

Second, the Committee went to considerable lengths to qualify and explain the limits of its findings, and doing so again acted responsibly. I do not take exception to any of the Committee's statements about the limits of its own findings.

Third, the Committee took explicit account of the political and administrative constraints operating on the knowledge development effort. I was asked by the Committee to prepare an analysis of the congressional and executive decisions leading up to YEDPA and a review of the implementation of the research and development program growing out of the Act. The Committee used my report responsibly to explain why the pressures operating on OYP/DOL led to the decisions that the Committee criticized. I find the Committee's use of my work to be consistent with my own interpretations of the events surrounding YEDPA.

Fourth, I agree generally with the Committee's conclusion that randomized field experiments, when they are feasible and when they meet specific prior conditions, produce valid and useful information about the effects of employment programs, though I think their promise is typically overstated by their advocates. I find the current generation of experiments to be a promising new

direction in employment policy research, but I think they leave certain basic questions about the nature of the programs under study unspecified.

My disagreements with the Committee's report relate more to what the Committee failed to say than to what it did say. From my perspective, the Committee was offered an opportunity not only to assess the YEDPA evidence by the canons of social science, but also to offer guidance about what role social science might or should play in decisions about employment policy. By taking a narrow view of its charge, the Committee acted responsibly but missed an opportunity to educate policymakers and the public at large to the role that social science can and cannot play in political and administrative decision-making. Because it did not take advantage of this opportunity, the Committee may have left the erroneous impression that only experimental evidence is admissible in debates about program effectiveness, or that experimental evidence has an intrinsically higher value that other forms of knowledge in adjudicating competing claims about what policy should be.

The domain of social science is narrow. Its utility is greatest when it sticks to strong canons of method and interpretation. The dominant point of view represented in the Committee's conclusions and recommendations is the experimentalist view of social science. Reduced to its essentials, the experimentalist view says that we learn the most about social interactions by studying them under highly controlled circumstances, where we can isolate specific events and study their effects -- hence, the significance of control groups and random assignment.

There are other equally valid social science perspectives. One in particular might be called naturalistic observation. This point of view says that we learn most when we directly observe human interaction, disturbing it as

little as possible, capitalizing on naturally-occurring variations.

Within the social science community, there are long-standing battles over the relative strengths and weaknesses of these points of view. Very few social scientists would argue, however, that one or the other view is invalid. Both have strict canons of method and interpretation. Both have significant advantages and disadvantages.

In a nutshell, the experimentalist approach works best -- that is, it produces valid and useful knowledge -- when it is preceded by a well-structured set of questions or hypotheses and a clear understanding of what is to be tested. Drug research is the best example. By the time doctors and pharmaceutical firms are prepared to run experiments on animals and humans, they know a great deal about the chemical properties of the drugs they are testing, and have narrowed the range of probable outcomes to a relative specific set of possibilities. Hence, drug experiments are capable of producing relatively precise estimates of effects. Even under these circumstances, experimental drug research often fails to detect latent, long-term side-effects.

The naturalistic approach works best when our prior understanding is weak and the interactions we're studying are complex. Early research on psychosis is a good example. People manifested bizarre and often destructive behavior, but it was unclear why. Sustained observation and detailed case histories gradually-- over a period of several decades-- narrowed the range of competing explanations to the point where precise questions could be framed. Experimentation was sometimes undertaken clumsily and prematurely-- shock treatment, for example-- when a less obtrusive method would have produced more valid and useful knowledge.

The Committee report, with its heavy emphasis on the experimental approach, makes strong, and largely unexamined, presumptions about the state of knowledge

in employment policy. It is far from clear to me, having worked in this area for a little over ten years now and having observed first-hand what employment training programs are like, that social scientists know enough about the processes they are studying to do productive experiments on employment programs.

Committee members' frustration with the ambiguous evidence coming from the YEDPA knowledge development effort, it seems to me, overpowered their better judgement as social scientists about the role of experimentation. They assumed that someone must know how to specify programs for experimentation, and hence that experimentation was the appropriate method for learning. I am very skeptical about this assumption.

The Job Corps finding is extremely important in this context. The Job Corps has been under relentless pressure since its initiation to justify its high participant costs and to be explicit about what it was trying to do. My hunch is that this pressure has had a lot to do with the Job Corps' success. But even with this pressure the program took at least a decade to develop its focus, and was nearly trashed three or four times during that period.

Two lessons emerge from this discussion of the domain of social science. The first is that while the Committee acted responsibly in evaluating the evidence against the canons of experimental research, it missed an important opportunity to frame the utility of experimental research in broader terms: What do we need to know before we begin to experiment and how should we learn it?

Second, the Committee failed to give sufficient attention to the social and political conditions that promote knowledge and understanding of how to deal with employment problems before experimental social science gets involved. These conditions are far more complex and precarious than the Committee acknowledges. They can be summarized briefly as follows: (a) a cadre of professionals and an

infrastructure of community organizations that have an incentive to work with the most difficult cases in the labor market; (b) financial and political support sufficient to sustain that system long enough to develop a working knowledge of how to address employment problems; (c) practical knowledge among practitioners about how to mount programs in a hostile economic and political environment; and (d) experience in advocating the claims of difficult clients in a labor market that does not recognize those claims.

By these standards, the Nation's federally-funded employment training system is a precarious and marginal enterprise at best. It lacks a stable workforce of practitioners with a common identity, its financial support has fluctuated widely, it has been swept periodically by short-term federal initiatives that disappear rapidly (of which YEDPA is only one), and it operates under the most stringent set of performance expectations of any federal domestic program.

In short, governments must invest in delivery systems, and the knowledge that goes with them, before they can experiment with those systems. Pressure for accountability and results is a healthy component of employment policy, but it easily results in the application of methods and standards that outrun our practical understanding of the problem and its solutions.

Social Science, Politics, and Administration

A related set of issues concerns the role that we should expect social science knowledge to play in politics and administration, and how policymakers and administrators can encourage that role. The story of YEDPA knowledge development is a story of unremitting political pressure, from the Congress and the executive, to produce results within the constraints that made sense in terms of electoral cycles but lacked any administrative or social scientific reality. YEDPA is also a story of the management of competing demands for the development

of a delivery system and the accumulation of knowledge about whether that delivery system works.

The administrator in charge of YEDPA knowledge development, Robert Taggart, has taken severe criticism from a number of quarters for his management of the effort. My assessment is that he did a competent and ingenious job within the constraints he was given by the Congress and the executive, but that the constraints were unreasonable for the results policymakers expected. In this sense, both the Congress and the executive acted irresponsibly. Much of the stigma that currently attaches to federal policy toward employment training--for young people and adults alike -- can be directly traced to the failure of Congress and the executive to provide a stable operating environment for the employment training system. YEDPA is only one example of this phenomenon.

Congress expected results from YEDPA in a year. Taggart set about producing something that would respond to that demand. The Carter administration, faced with a deteriorating economy and the failure of its welfare reform proposal, wanted something for the President to run on in 1980. Taggart again responded. Throughout all this, Taggart was trying both to create a delivery system for youth employment programs and to set in motion a research strategy for studying its effects. Taggart understood better than anyone that it didn't make sense to use refined methods to study something you can't describe in the most basic terms. A large proportion of YEDPA's initial funding was for "developmental" projects that had little utility in producing results that would satisfy social scientists or inquisitive policymakers, but were necessary antecedents to any kind of research. By the time these developmental efforts began to bear fruit, YEDPA had been scrapped.

Any interpretation of the YEDPA results, or any characterization of their

merit as social science, should take account of the political and administrative environment in which the effort was conducted. If there ever was a federal program that was designed to fail, YEDPA was it. Taggart's major shortcoming may have been his determination to try to make it work and his naive confidence that something would happen to redeem it. Neither proved to be true.

YEDPA does not show Congress or the executive at their best. It does, however, give some important lessons for future policymakers. The first of these is to listen when practitioners say, as they did at the authorization hearings for YEDPA, that development and institution-building have to precede evaluation. Congress said, in effect, "you don't know what to do, so here's a year and billion to find out." It takes a lot longer than that to build a delivery system and study it. Taggart did his best to build the system at the same time he was trying to study it. The result was to cover up a fundamental defect in the design of federal policy. The main lesson is "don't try to study it until you're reasonably sure it's there to be studied."

Second, efforts as ambitious and broad-scale as YEDPA's knowledge development effort have to be supported administratively within the federal agencies where they are housed. Taggart ran his operation -- massive by federal domestic research and development standards -- with a skeleton staff of under-qualified people. The Office of Management and Budget and the leadership of DOL did not see YEDPA as worth the investment of skilled talent. This was a critical failure.

Third, efforts like YEDPA have to be buffered to some degree from the kind of political wind-shears that Taggart confronted. This can be done, while at the same time providing policymakers with short-term results to campaign on, by building multi-year development commitments into experimental programs before

social science research is introduced to make judgements about effectiveness.

Finally, policymakers should learn to ask the obvious questions about practice and to make their decisions reflect the answers they get. When youth employment practitioners told Congress that they had ideas, but lacked strong institutions and practices, they were giving useful advice. Congress didn't hear it.

Knowing What and Knowing How

Underlying the NRC Committee's, the Congress', and the executive's problems with YEDPA is a common theme: the failure to acknowledge that there is a difference between knowing "what works" and knowing "how to do it." Policymakers have become smitten with the idea that social science research can tell them politically and substantively useful things. Social scientists have become smitten with the idea of saying things that are considered useful by people in power. What policymakers mainly want to know from social scientists, when they get around to asking, is "what works?" That was the question behind the YEDPA knowledge development effort. That question is also the one that is most conducive to being answered with conventional social science methods.

But before policymakers and social scientists can answer the "what works" question, someone somewhere in a complex delivery system must have at least a tentative answer to the "how to do it" question. Before you can experiment-- it seems painfully obvious-- you have to know what you're experimenting with. The solution to the "how to do it" problem in most domains of social problem-solving-- education, medicine, psychiatry, social work, etc.-- is to invest in a workforce of trained practitioners, a system for educating them, and a set of institutions for them to practice in. In employment training, the solution has been either to create free-standing marginal organizations, without trained

practitioners, or to attach the function to other organizations-- community colleges, vocational schools, etc. -- that may or may not understand the problems of the difficult-to-employ. Policymakers have not taken seriously the "how to do it" question, but have continued to ask the "what works" question. The results of this tendency are played out in episodes like the YEDPA knowledge development effort. We will begin to get better answers to the "what works" question when we take seriously the idea that reaching and training high-risk youth is demanding and dignified work for people with brains and skill whose knowledge should be respected and understood by policymakers and social scientists.

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